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JOHN BULL

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UNBROKEN

by

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EDITORIAL

Welcome, friend!

RECORD numbers of visitors are now pouring into Britain. They are drawn not only by the Coronation, but by the sense of history which breathes in every town and village; by the natural splendours; and by the good-will of us natives who, by and large, look on tourists as friends, not "dollar-earners."

Nevertheless, it *is* important that our 250,000 North American visitors will this year bring us £47 million in dollars and a further 567,000 will bring in £80 million in other currencies.

Whether they get their full money's-worth is sometimes doubtful.

POOR service, dull food and rigid mealtimes will face some visitors. And often they will go away complaining. One result is that thirty-three per cent of American visitors to Europe actually steer clear of Britain altogether.

MAXWELL
"A difficult time . . ."

"Our hotels are doing the best they can," says Sir Alexander Maxwell, chairman of the British Travel and Holidays Association. "But they have had a difficult time recovering from the war."

Tourism is now Europe's chief dollar-earner and almost every European government other than Great Britain's gives its hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions top priority. France and Switzerland have whole Ministries to keep the tourist happy. Holland runs cheap State hotels. Spain gives visitors a favourable rate of exchange.

BUT our government spends only the £665,000 it grants to the British Travel and Holidays Association. "In many other ways the government actually penalizes the tourist trade," says an Association official. "If an hotelier on the Continent wants to add more bathrooms he is lent money cheaply and given every assistance. Here, he may be denied licences, his rateable value goes up and he gets no purchase tax concessions."

THE ordinary member of the British public must assert himself on behalf of the visitor from abroad; he must speak up when he finds the soup cold, the "veal" rabbit, or the beds unaired.

And he must encourage by praise when it is due, as it often is.

The government, the industry and the public must all be in this together. Then we should be able to say far more often to visitors—and their vital currency—"Welcome to Britain."

THIS WEEK'S COVER

OFTEN the background for fashion photographers' models, the Irish Guardsman keeps an easy "deadpan" face for the tourists Kenneth Wynn saw while sketching near Buckingham Palace. Wynn came to London three years ago from Leicester, with no art school training. Now a successful magazine and commercial artist, he has just painted a series of industrial figures for a leading West End store's Coronation decorations.

still more people are using

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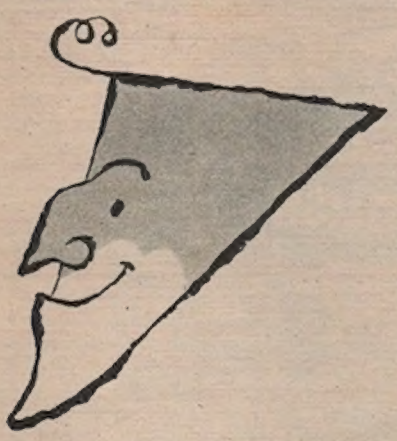

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MAY 16, 1953 VOL. 93 NUMBER 2446 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

Ourselves— as others see us

AS a Frenchman who knew England well some sixteen years ago, I often looked forward to coming back after the war. I asked myself how you would have changed in that time.

Now that I have returned, what do I find? The people seem even more patient than they were. There are orderly queues everywhere. The terrible traffic jams are much worse, but nobody hoots or races his engine. The little gardens outside the houses are very neat and tidy, and the streets are clean. But the food in your homes is as bad as ever, and the public houses still close when I want a drink. The English Sunday is far gayer, and everyone seems happier for it. The children have changed most of all. They are the healthiest and the most wide-awake I have seen.—L. de B., London, W.1.

Pastimes Galore

THERE is no need to retire to boredom ("Free Speech," April 25). Mrs. D. D. and her husband should breed budgerigars. It is a fascinating hobby, and can be profitable.—MRS. IVY MOUNTJOY, South View Road, London, N.8.

. . . I am nearly seventy-six, but I get a lot of pleasure from weaving with a hand-loom. I make rugs, scarves and cushion covers.—ARTHUR SCHOFIELD, Lymm, Warrington, Lancashire.

. . . My husband and I joined a bowling club, and took up old-time dancing.—MRS. A. D., Thames Ditton, Surrey.

. . . If Mr. D. D. buys a pup and trains it, he will have the finest hobby and companion imaginable.—E. A. RICHARDSON, Cliffsea Grove, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

Second Time Heavy

THE talking weighing machines at a London terminus intrigued my small son. He clamoured to be weighed, and I lifted him on to the platform. "Two stone, eight pounds," intoned the voice. As we were walking away, I acted on a sudden impulse. Back we went, and he got on the machine again. This time, the voice had changed its mind: "Two stone, eleven pounds," it boomed.—S. B. GEE, Sussex Square, London, W.2.

Youngster Astray

ONE afternoon last month, I noticed that my five-year-old son, who had been playing in the garden with his dog, had disappeared. Half an hour later, he was still missing, and I started to search—in vain. Then my wife remembered that he had spoken of walking to a town, more than fourteen miles away, where his sisters were spending the weekend. I got out the car, and drove about two and a half miles along the road he would have taken, before I decided he could not have got so far. I turned back and hunted nearer home. When dusk fell, I became really alarmed and phoned the police. My wife was in tears, and neighbours helped me to search the neighbourhood with torches and dogs. At eight o'clock, the police phoned to say they had found him in a nearby town. He had covered eight miles, wearing gumboots and followed by a dog without collar or lead. The moral seems to be twofold: if a child is lost, tell the police promptly—and don't underestimate the distance he may have covered.—J. D. A., Middlesex.

Cooler Clothes

A FRIEND of mine once had the courage to try lightweight summer-wear as suggested in your Editorial ("Bundled Up," April 25). It was stifling, so he left off his jacket and entered his business club wearing a colourful shirt. Next day, he received a letter from the club management. "Come suitably dressed, or else. . . ." said the note.—G. THEMYNE, Greville Street, London, E.C.1.

. . . Waistcoats could be worn as outside garments on hot days, if the backs were made of material instead of silk lining. This would be smart and cool.—P. R. FOSTER, Wright Street, Codnor, Derbyshire.

The book all Britain is talking about begins in John Bull on May 30

IN THE WET

by NEVIL SHUTE

Full details next week

Caravan Comments

ALTHOUGH the Caravan Club agrees with the main theme of your Editorial "Trailing Behind" (JOHN BULL, April 18), the details may be misleading. There are no statistics for caravanning, but 100,000 is a fair guess for the total of home, holiday and touring caravans. Site fees over 20s. a week are unusual and rarely justified. There *is* profiteering and failure to plough back profits, but further advances will come steadily, if slowly, from goodwill and co-operation between all concerned.—D. M. G. CHIDSON, Secretary, The Caravan Club, London, W.C.1.

. . . Thousands of decent folk owning small parcels of land would be only too willing to build roads and sanitary accommodation for caravans—if local authorities would grant them long-term licences for sites.—A. S. JENKINSON, Secretary, Caravan Residents Association, Taplow, Bucks.

. . . Herne Bay Council has developed sites for 450 caravans at Reculver. There are flush lavatories, hand-basins, foot-baths, showers and wringers. The charge is £1 per week.—D. ROGERS, Entertainments Manager, Herne Bay, Kent.

Pram Warning

WHY on earth can't prams be fitted with some means of signalling their approach? Motor-cars are fitted with horns, bicycles have their bells, yet when I take baby shopping, I become hoarse through asking people to move out of the way. I have come to the conclusion that a large bell fixed to the pram handle is the best idea.—MRS. E. S., Watford, Herts.

Thoughts Elsewhere

MRS. E. M. KAY, of Leeds, has company in her absentmindedness ("Free Speech," April 25). One day last week, I fetched a shovelful of coal, lifted the lid of a saucepan and tipped the coal into my lovely stew.—MRS. M. YORK, Aldershot.

. . . I put the cat's supper into a dish and took it into my son for his evening meal.—MRS. W. G. BRADLEY, Bournemouth, Hampshire.

Abroad On Wheels

A FRIEND of mine plans to take his motor-cycle with him on a holiday in Eire. He has been told that, unless he joins one of the motoring organizations, he cannot obtain the necessary documents. Are people taking vehicles abroad compelled to enrol in this way? — E. B. BEARDMORE, Gornal Wood, Dudley, Worcestershire.

"Anyone can take a vehicle abroad," says the Automobile Association. "But the independent traveller has to deposit a large sum of money with the Customs, to cover possible sale of the vehicle in another country. Touring documents take time and trouble to collect. We simply stand surety for our members, and save them a lot of trouble."

Fine On The Spot

VISITING Dublin, I was impressed by the low accident rate. I soon found out the reason. Through ignorance of local regulations, I committed a traffic offence. The policeman promptly wrote out a ticket for a 10s. fine—until he heard I was English. Then he let me off with a caution. Otherwise, I should have had to remit the fine by post within seven days—an efficient rule.—M. H., Alexandra Grove, London, N.12.

Shiftwork Studies

TOURING Germany, I noticed that the younger children went to school in shifts—some in the morning, and the others in the afternoon. Here in England, we have better facilities, yet still suffer from overcrowding. I feel that the shift method would help teachers to give more individual attention to smaller classes. — MISS H. H. SHARPE, London, S.W.20.

"This has often been suggested," says the Ministry of Education, "but it isn't thought practicable for this country. The real solution is more schools for overcrowded areas, and more teachers to staff them."

Letters intended for publication should be as brief as possible and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

MOTHER OF FIVE (38) AND PENSIONER (72) BOTH SAY:

Fynnon Salt relieved their rheumatic pain

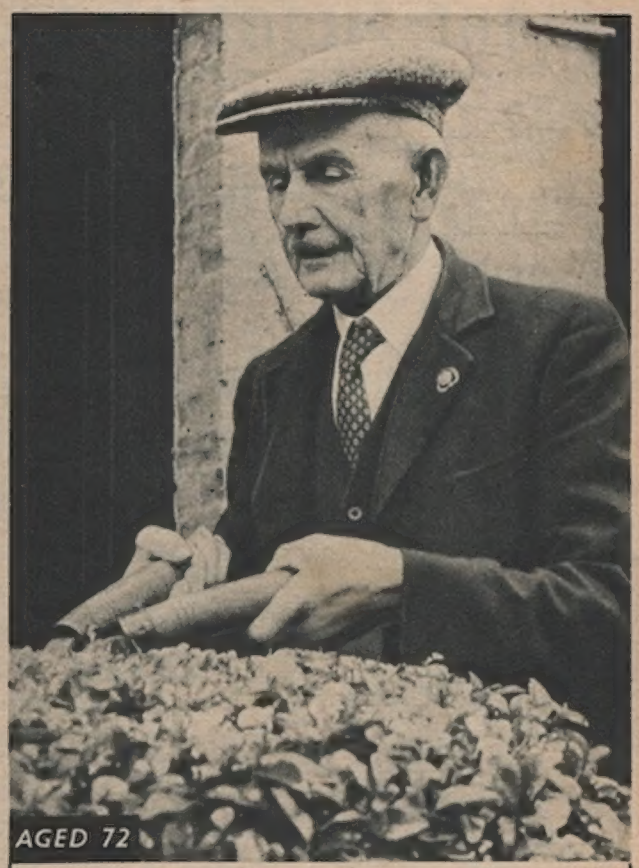
Their experience offers hope to Britain's one million sufferers... and to YOU!

'*I really must tell you . . . the wonderful relief Fynnon Salt gives*', writes 38 year old Mrs. Hetty Edwards, Stamford Hill, London. '*I am the mother of 5 children and cannot afford to . . . be off my feet. I get attacks of Fibrositis in the back and for months have suffered agony . . . the last time I got it so severely I was ordered to be flat on my back for weeks—but someone recommended Fynnon Salt. Now at the first sign of pain I take it. The results are marvellous.*'

Mr. W. H. Gillett, 72, gardener and oldest member of the Headcorn, Kent, British Legion branch, shares Mrs. Edwards' enthusiasm for Fynnon. '*I am an Old Age Pensioner, several years ago I suffered with Rheumatism and for a long time I could not get my arm up to shave,*' Mr. Gillett writes. '*I took to taking your Fynnon Salts and am still taking them, my Rheumatism has disappeared thanks to your Salts. I always recommend them to my friends.*'

AGED 38

No one would believe that Mrs. Edwards used to be bed-ridden with rheumatism to see how easily she copes with housework—including a spot of decorating! Five children and a husband on shift work don't leave much time for rest!



AGED 72

A few years ago Mr. Gillett's arms were so painful he could work only a few hours a day at gardening which is both his occupation and his hobby. Now, at 72, he does a vigorous day's work and quite recently bought himself a new bicycle!

THESE experiences of a busy young housewife and an active older man are only two of the many real stories which come unsolicited to the Fynnon offices every week. They tell of the amazing relief which Fynnon Salt has brought to thousands of sufferers from rheumatism.

These stories are not surprising when you consider that Fynnon Salt provides a treatment which accords with modern scientific findings on rheumatism. The findings confirm that improper elimination of impurities from the system frequently accompanies and contributes to rheumatic conditions—such as neuritis, lumbago, sciatica, fibrositis and gout.

Two-Way Action

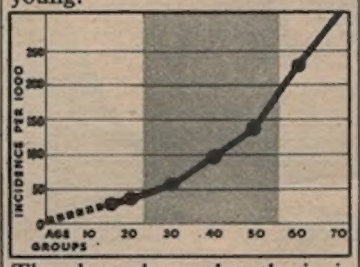
The action of the natural salts in Fynnon provides a two-way attack to clear away rheumatism-causing impurities from the system:

1. It is an effective but gentle laxative working on the scientific principle of osmosis. This natural process utilises body fluid, filtered through the intestinal tissues, to rid the system of waste matter.
2. It acts as a diuretic, flushing and clearing the kidneys and reducing the concentration of impurities in the blood — the approved treatment for certain rheumatic conditions.

Not only old people suffer

Today medical science is mobilising its resources for the fight against rheumatism with the establishment of special clinics throughout the country. Although much remains to be learned before this disease is fully understood, the therapeutic value of the natural salts in Fynnon is evinced by the relief it has brought to thousands of rheumatic sufferers.

What recent medical investigation has revealed is the widespread incidence of rheumatism, and the surprising extent to which it is able to strike victims among the middle-aged and even the young.



The chart shows that the incidence of rheumatism is greatest among the over 65's.

But what is less well known is the revelation that rheumatic diseases attack so many people between the ages of 25 and 45. Numerous cases whose full effects are not experienced until later life get their start during these critical middle years.

Act on first twinges

Specialists who have studied rheumatism are insistent that if early rheumatic pains are not ignored but are given prompt treatment, much of the subsequent misery and crippling effect of rheumatism can be avoided.

Don't shrug off the first rheumatic twinges. This is a dangerous policy. Rather, start taking Fynnon Salt, and keep it up (adjusting the dosage to your individual need) until its unique combination of natural salts has had a chance to help you.

Fynnon fights rheumatism

Fynnon Salt is of proven benefit in the treatment of many cases of rheumatism. It is an efficient scientific preparation particularly designed for the treatment of rheumatism and similar complaints.

Take a teaspoonful of Fynnon Salt morning or night in a glass of water (some people prefer to take it in tea). Continue the treatment for three weeks . . . you, too, will find marked relief. *But remember, if you are seriously worried about your condition or if it doesn't respond to treatment, don't fail to consult your doctor.*

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For the relief of

NEURITIS · LUMBAGO · SCIATICA · FIBROSITIS · RHEUMATISM · GOUT

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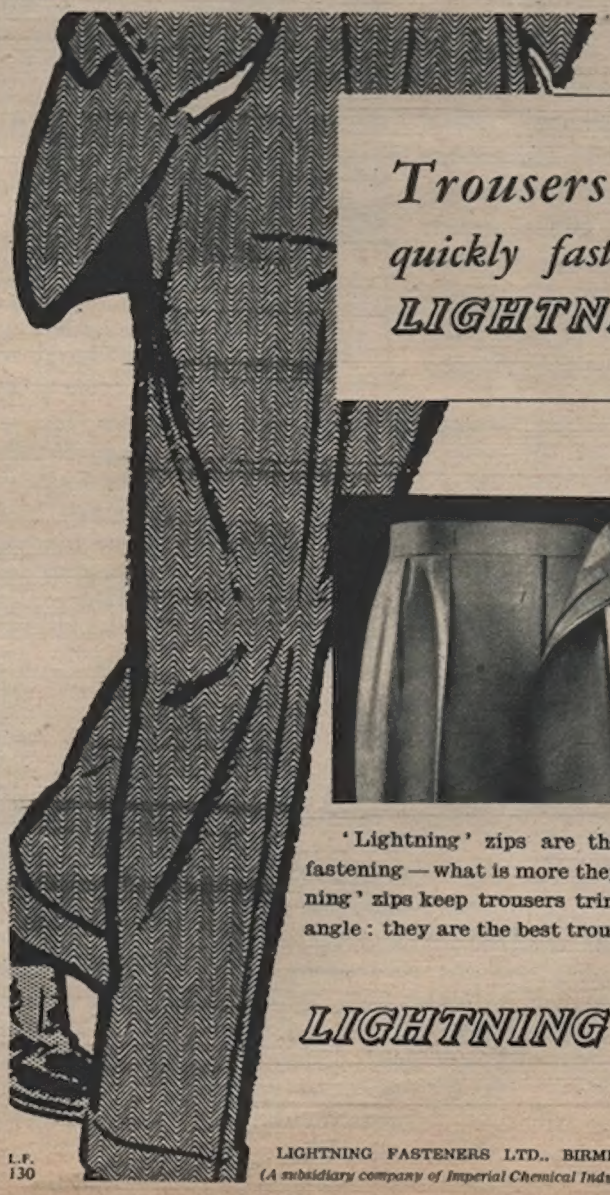

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ICI

One of the Royal Navy's most daring commanders begins a story unrivalled in the exciting history of submarine warfare

THE EPIC PATROLS OF H.M.S. UNBROKEN

by ALASTAIR MARS, D.S.O., D.S.C.

CAPE ST. VINCENT disappeared into the sea astern, and we set course past Cadiz for Cape Trafalgar. Within forty-eight hours we would be at Gibraltar. It was ten thirty. The wardroom was dark and silent. I unbuttoned my jacket and stretched out on the settee that served as my bed.

I twisted on the hard, unyielding cushions and wished we were at Gibraltar, where there would be mail from home—news of my wife and the daughter I had not seen. June, we had agreed to call her. I wondered whom she resembled, and hoped Ting had left hospital to join her aunt at Aldeburgh. It was February, 1942; I was twenty-six years old and for the first time in command of a submarine—the newly launched H.M.S. Unbroken.

"Night alarm!" The voice of Taylor, my first lieutenant, boomed down the voice-pipe into the control-room.

As the order was relayed through the boat by alarm buzzer, I leaped from the settee, grabbed my glasses from the table, slithered across the control-room and climbed to the bridge. I heard Taylor order a change of course. The moon was high and to the south the sea was glass-smooth; there was hardly any wind. Taylor was leaning over the voice-pipe. He turned towards me. "Darkened ship on port bow, sir. I'm altering course to intercept." To the voice-pipe: "Midships . . . Steady!"

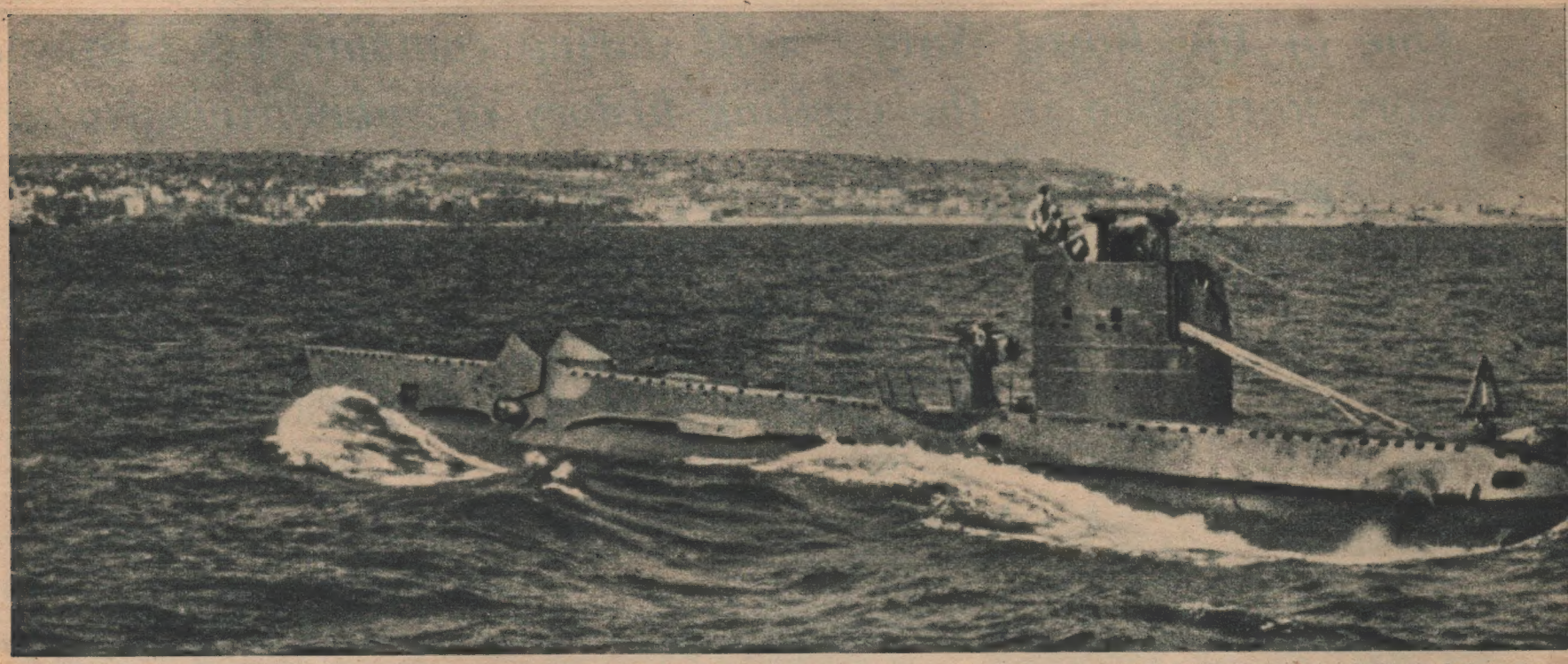
From the helmsman below: "Course, sir, oh-seven-oh."

Taylor raised his glasses. "There she is now, sir, bearing green three-oh."

I levelled my glasses parallel to his. In the bottom half of the lenses the blackness of the sea; in the top half the dark grey of the cloud-filled night. Between, on the sharply defined

ILLUSTRATION BY EDWARD OSMOND

At the head of the bridge, I saw the trawler alter course, steering straight towards us. *She's going to ram us!* I thought wildly. "Stand by to dive!"



Unbroken in the Mediterranean. When Mars arrived the situation was grim. Tenth Flotilla had been forced to quit Malta; British wrecks littered the sea.

line of the horizon, the smudge of a small ship without lights. I thought at once of the warning we had received that "Q" ships—armed trawlers masquerading as innocent fishermen—were lurking in the area.

A serious menace to Allied shipping, a "Q" trawler was quite a handful for a small submarine to tackle. Equipped with both asdic and depth charges, she carried a gun that outranged our own, and her defence against submarines was the knowledge that her short length made her a difficult torpedo target. Since we did not expect to meet friendly forces until next day, the ship on the horizon might well be such a vessel. The odds were not altogether against us, however. With naval radar little more than a good idea on a drawing board, we might be able to creep to within a thousand yards, pump ten quick shells into her, or try our luck with a torpedo.

Taylor "trimmed down"—ordered the flooding of numbers two, three, four and five main ballast tanks so that we rode on the air contained in numbers one and six only. This caused us to settle in the water, reducing our silhouette, and also kept us ready for a quick dive.

"Gun action stations," I ordered.

Mystery Ship Ignored Challenge

The five men of the gun's crew, who had mustered at the foot of the conning tower when "Night Alarm" was sounded, clattered to the bridge and climbed over to the gun platform. They unlocked the gun and unclipped the waterproof ready-use lockers with their ten rounds of ammunition. Haddow, the armament officer, who would direct the fire of the gun, had already joined me on the bridge with Signalman Osborne. The ammunition party formed up in a human chain from the magazine to the gun.

Haddow leaned over to the gun platform. "Bearing green three-oh . . . A ship . . . Range oh-three-oh . . . Deflection twelve left . . . *Load!*" The gun swung on its mounting. "Ready to open fire, sir," Haddow reported.

We waited, tense. I felt certain the others would hear my heart thumping against my ribs. The seconds dragged by. As we neared each other, there was no mistaking that the unknown vessel was a trawler.

"Osborne, make the single-letter challenge."

The aldis lamp stabbed a thick beam in the direction of the trawler. "Challenge made, sir."

No reply. Again we challenged—and again. Still no reply. Was she trying to lure us closer? By rights we should open fire.

"In international code, tell her to stop," I ordered. We were near enough now for the flashing of the aldis lamp to illuminate the trawler like a miniature searchlight. She looked British. I thought: *If she's one of ours what the hell is she up to? Or is she really an enemy ship playing clever? We're only a thousand yards off her; she could massacre us with machine guns. . . .*

"Haddow!"

"Sir?"

"Fire one round across her bows."

With a flash and a roar, a three-inch shell screamed through the air, pitched some two hundred yards ahead of the trawler's bows and ricocheted into space.

It served its purpose; an immediate reply came to our challenge. To confirm, we again challenged and again received the correct reply. So she *was* British, but I was in no mood to extend a big hallo. For one thing, I was furious with the operational staff at Gibraltar who had not bothered to inform me of the trawler's presence in the area; for another I was anything but impressed by the trawler's look-outs and her delay in answering my signal. My immediate feeling was that she had deserved to be sunk.

We altered course to pass under her stern. As we did so, a cloud of smoke billowed from the trawler's funnel. She, too, was altering course—straight towards us! *She's going to ram us!* I thought wildly. "Stand by to dive. . . . Full ahead together. . . . Fire a night grenade."

In the light of the recognition firework, the gun's crew, signalman and look-outs scampered below, followed by Haddow. I was alone on the bridge with Taylor. "She'll depth charge us if we dive," he said.

"My God, I believe she would."

Then, without warning, the trawler's gun flashed and a shell screamed over our heads. Again she fired. Now we were in a real mess. If we stayed on top she would blow us out of the water. If we dived she would depth charge

John Haig Haddow, Unbroken's armament officer. "A Scot with an undemonstrative toughness that was often mistaken for softness, he had a great sense of humour," writes Mars

Handsome Paul Thirsk, Unbroken's navigator. "He was the type of man you would like your sister to marry. Women, indeed, fell for him by the score, but Paul spurned them all"

Unbroken was the only fighting submarine left

us. Yet she was British—unless the enemy had got hold of our recognition signals.

I thought quickly. "Signalman on the bridge," I yelled. Osborne climbed through the conning tower hatch, aldis in hand, lead trailing behind. "Make the rudest two-word signal you can think of," I ordered.

The aldis beamed across the water. "Done, sir."

Yes, the trawler was British for, as though obeying Osborne's impolite command, she altered course away from us. As she did so there burst forth one, then two great flares which slowly parachuted down to the sea. The trawler had fired star shells. This was the most extraordinary piece of stupidity I had come across in many a long day. We had been quite visible to the trawler, and the star shells served no purpose save to attract every U-boat within a radius of thirty miles. I relieved my feeling by giving the trawler's captain a severe telling off before sending him about his business. Later, when we arrived at Gibraltar, I discovered he was senior to me, but nonetheless he apologized for the incident. I learned also that he shot down a Focke-Wulf during his patrol, and I could not resist asking: "What with? Star shells?"

Routine That Frayed The Nerves

If it served no other purpose, the encounter with the trawler provided the crew with a fresh topic of conversation, and gave new animation to the interminable games of solo, cribbage and ukkers (ludo) in the messes. Routine life aboard a submarine is a dull, monotonous business. You eat, sleep, test and exercise; read, argue and write letters; speculate and reminisce—and all the time the air becomes heavier and more sour, tempers grow short and nerves are frayed.

Although it was now three months since they had joined Unbroken, and although we were living in the closest proximity, I knew very little about my officers. John Haig Haddow I knew better than the others, for he had served in my training submarine—a hazel-eyed Scot, barely twenty-one years old, very tall and willowy, with an undemonstrative toughness that was often mistaken for softness, and great sense of humour. Taylor, plump and jolly, was some three years older than myself, a reservist from the Merchant Navy. Paul Thirsk, the navigator, was also a reservist, tall, blond, handsome and twenty-three years old. Later, Peter Churchill, the secret agent, summed him up admirably when he said: "Thirsk is the type of man you would like your sister to marry." Women did, indeed, fall for him by the score, but he spurned them all and devoted his passion to the care and maintenance of an ancient check golfing jacket which he wore on watch. He claimed it brought him luck.

We were still comparative strangers, even though we lived, ate and slept together in a wardroom that measured no more than seven feet by nine—including two feet of passage-way for people passing from forrard to aft. Our beds consisted of two settees and two bunks; lockers beneath the settees completed our austere furnishings. Not that the sailors were better off, of course. Some were lucky enough to have settees on which to sleep, others slung hammocks, while the remainder had to bed down as best they could in the forrard torpedo-room.

The discipline of routine dominated our topsy-turvy lives—the routine of a day which scheduled breakfast at 10 a.m. and the mid-day meal at eight in the evening, and which did not permit us to see daylight and sunshine save through the end of a periscope. We dived at dawn and surfaced at dusk, and it was only during the hours of darkness, when the submarine was illuminated by the dull glow of dim red lighting, that we were able to smoke, stretch our legs over a tot of rum and pause to reflect upon the unhappy life of those who served in

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Alastair Mars, D.S.O., D.S.C. and Bar, pictured here in 1942 while commanding Unbroken, sank 30,000 tons of enemy shipping in the Mediterranean in one year. He also scored an all-time record by torpedoing two fast-moving cruisers with one salvo. These exploits won him a D.S.O. and D.S.C., and a reputation as one of the most brilliant submarine captains of the war. During his thirty war patrols—some in the Far East, where he won a Bar to his D.S.C.—he survived fifteen depth charge attacks and was claimed "sunk" five times. After the war he served in the Far East as a lieutenant-commander. Then, last year, came his sensational court martial and dismissal, following an altercation with the Admiralty over an appointment in which he claimed that he had been deceived. Mars is thirty-seven, married, and has two children. He is now writing his second book

Love and Mr. Pickering

by ***JACK TREVOR STORY***

ILLUSTRATED BY SHOWELL

It was such a small lie, but it led to a mountain of deceit. Now it looked as though he'd lose his wife

MR. PICKERING OPENED the door of his car and smelt perfume. And that was odd, because his wife used no kind of scent so far as he was aware; and anyway, it had not been there the night before. It meant that a woman had been inside the car between seven o'clock—no, eight o'clock last night (he'd stayed late at the store, stocktaking)—and this morning.

Odd, but not impossible. He had not yet got a garage on this new housing estate and he had to leave the car under a tree on a bit of waste land. It was old, the doors wouldn't lock, and there was nothing to stop somebody getting in, though why they should want to was beyond him. Until he also smelt, mingled with the perfume, the stale tobacco smoke.

"Well!" Mr. Pickering said.

Perfume and smoke. He knew what *that* meant. And he had to smile, though he was a chapel man himself when he got the time. At fifty, he was a small man with a very usual kind of face set with a rather distinctive moustache; and he was tolerant by nature. "Live and let live" was one of his favourite mottoes, of which he had quite a number.

Another, for instance, was "Better safe than sorry." He thought of this as he was about to drive back and pick up his wife. It was not that his wife would suspect him of anything underhand if she smelt the perfume, but she was inclined to be fussy and probably would not like to think of a courting couple using their car for a good-night kiss. She would insist on him fitting locks or keeping watch—or something troublesome. Better to open all the windows, drive once around the crescent and blow the smell away. And this is what he did.

"What was all that in aid of?" Mrs. Pickering asked when he finally stopped outside the front gate. "I thought you'd gone without me."

"Warming up the engine," Mr. Pickering explained blithely.

Then he frowned. He had just told his wife a lie and that had never been a habit of his. It was not worth lying merely to save a little explanation. After all, he had done nothing wrong.

That lie worried him in a niggly sort of way all day, and that evening he decided to get it off his conscience while she was busy in the kitchen and not looking at him. But somehow he could not bring himself to do it. Explaining now after lying in the morning was—well, embarrassing. He would blush and she would think he really was hiding something—or else trying to confess something dreadful. Better to forget all about it.

Mr. Pickering did forget it until about a week later, when he opened his car door and there it was again—perfume and smoke. The same suggestive combination, the same couple. And then Mr. Pickering saw that his wife had followed him across, carrying her shopping bag.

"I thought it would save you coming back to pick me up," she said.

It was a moment of panic for Mr. Pickering. He began swinging the door as though to test the hinges, but really to disperse the smell. If she found out about it now he would have to confess that it wasn't the first time and then he would have to explain why he had not mentioned it—oh, it was getting too complicated for words. He was beginning to feel *guilty*.

"Look," he said, in sudden desperation, "why don't you let me do your shopping and bring it home midday?"

"Why, Norman!" Mrs. Pickering's homely face registered disappointment and surprise. "You know how much I look forward to coffee and cream buns in Maison Jones."

Mr. Pickering nodded miserably. "The fact is, I just remembered that I promised to pick up old Bruton. By the time I get over there——"

This annoyed his wife very much. "So you put some stranger before your own wife! Perhaps you *want* me to hang around in bus queues and turn my cold into pneumonia!"

"No, no," Mr. Pickering interrupted, consolingly, for he had forgotten his wife had a cold and could not smell a thing—she had told him so at breakfast, but they never listened to each other. "I was only thinking of your convenience, dear," he said. "Do get in."

He cruised away at a light-hearted thirty miles an hour now the danger was over. It probably wouldn't happen again, and anyway he was not a man to bother too much about the future. Sufficient unto the day. . . .

HIS wife first smelt the perfume on a Sunday, when they were out for a spin. Mr. Pickering was off his guard and, as was bound to happen, made things immeasurably worse by his reactions.

When she mentioned the perfume he made a clumsy effort to change the subject, then he denied that there was any smell in the car, and finally—but much too late—he admitted that he could smell the scent. By that time his face was crimson and he was not daring to look at her.

It was an unfortunate performance and Mrs. Pickering was still waiting for an explanation of the scent.

"I—I can't understand it myself," he muttered.

She was positive that he could. Little incidents of the past were now pushing into her mind. Things which had seemed harmless now took on a new significance.

Stocktaking, she was thinking, remembering

Mr. Pickering went up to the car and peered

all those late nights. The time he tried to go without her, the morning he pretended that he had to pick up Bruton. Oh, it all came back to her now. How simple he must have thought her!

The drive went on and the sun shone, but the hearts of the Pickerings were not in it. Outside the car it was summer, but inside there was a ridge of high pressure and a deep depression sitting side by side, separated by an atmosphere that you could cut with a knife.

That evening, when Mr. Pickering saw his wife preparing to take 'Eustace, the springer spaniel, for his nightly run, he had an idea. Here was an excuse to go out and catch the couple in his car—that would explain everything.

"I'll take the dog out tonight, Ada," he offered. "You look tired."

Ada looked at him. What was this? Whereas before her enlightenment she hardly listened to him, she was now analysing every word, action and expression. This offer seemed harmless enough on the face of it, because she felt tired and she knew that she looked it. In fact, in the past few hours she had become acutely conscious of how she looked. She tried to imagine what kind of woman would use that perfume. A young woman. A girl from the store, most probably.

"All right," she said. "The lead's over there."

"No hurry," Mr. Pickering said, thinking that

in through the window. He saw two white, startled faces, close together, peering back at him

the later he left it the better chance of catching the culprits. "I'll go about eleven."

Hah! Mrs. Pickering understood. Who cared what time you took a dog for its walk? Certainly not the dog. He obviously expected to meet someone. And another gate opened in her mind as she recalled the times her husband had made excuses to go out late at night. To see if he'd switched off the ignition, to get a breath of fresh air, to fetch something he'd left in the car. . . .

"I've changed my mind," she said sharply. "*I'll* take him—I could do with a breath of air."

"Very well," Mr. Pickering said. He knew what was in her mind. He would soon make her feel sorry for the things she was thinking about him.

As he watched his wife from the front bay window, he was glad to see that she did not walk towards the car. When she and the dog had vanished beyond the last lamplight round the crescent, he slipped out and hastened towards his parking place.

He was disappointed. The car was empty. But then, it was a fine night and the chances were that the courting couple, whoever they were, only used it as a last resort. He remembered, sadly and nostalgically, the times he and Ada had searched for some quiet place to say good night—which in those days had been another word for love. Standing there in the shadows on the building plot, watching the empty car, he experienced a glow of deep feeling for his wife and their life together; of regret that they had taken each other for granted over so many swift years.

It was the dog's reproving bark that made Mr. Pickering jump. Ada must have cut across the vacant lot from the other side of the crescent. He thought she glanced at him, but in the gloom he could not see her face very clearly. He fell into step beside her.

"Thought I'd come and meet you," he said cheerfully.

It was not a bit convincing. Even the dog, by nature a jumper and licker, remained cool and aloof as they walked home.

So she didn't turn up, Mrs. Pickering thought.

That night, miserably sleepless, Mrs. Pickering fought the thing out with herself. Was it merely a transitory waywardness to which men of a certain age become susceptible? If so, the sensible solution was to give him some of the attraction he seemed to be seeking elsewhere. She could do nothing about her age, of course, but she could certainly improve her cooking, her figure and her clothes; which was, she considered, the right order for a man of Norman's age. Then there was the perfume; she thought it was Provocation. Anyway, it would be easy to check and obtain.

In the morning, Mrs. Pickering said she would use the bus into town, and left her husband to think what he liked.

In a way he was glad, because the car, when he got to it, had been recharged with the perfume and the smoke. Right, he thought, this is a job for the police. Why should he suffer?

He knew that they would want all details and therefore, when he saw Miss Larkey of Cosmetics waiting to be let into the main entrance of the store, he stopped his car and called her across. She could identify the perfume if anybody could.

"Would you mind getting into my car a moment?" he asked her.

It was just bad luck that Mrs. Pickering happened to be passing by on the lower deck of a bus at that particular moment. She saw the extremely attractive blonde with long, nyloned legs getting out of her husband's car. She saw her husband holding open the door and smiling at this creature—fawning, she thought, was a better word.

Well, that was that. Now she knew what she was up against. Mentally, she rearranged her strategy. Cooking went to the bottom, Provocation to the top. It was her first purchase that morning.

Mr. Pickering was too busy to call in at the police station that day, although he had all details ready, including the name of the perfume and the brand of cigarette, for he had found stubs. He rang his wife in the early afternoon when she had just exhausted herself struggling into an expensive but tortuous foundation garment, in search of a figure.

"I'll be late, dear," he said. "Last day of stocktaking. Probably about nine."

After what she had just gone through on his account, and knowing what she did, she could hardly find words to reply. "I see," she said, and hung up.

Thoughtfully, Mr. Pickering replaced the receiver. There was evidently a hard, recriminating side to his wife's character which he had never suspected.

WHEN Mr. Pickering arrived home that night, just before ten o'clock, he was not altogether surprised to find the house deserted apart from the dog, whom he ignored. He made a quick search and discovered nothing missing except his wife's best outdoor ensemble: shoes, costume, swagger coat and a frivolous hat she kept for weddings.

Not until he was turning away from his wife's wardrobe did he smell that elusive perfume. He was immensely puzzled by it. He thought she never used perfume. He was beginning to realize that there were many things he did not know about his wife. He soon located the small bottle on a shelf. It was the stuff Miss Larkey had identified for him that morning. It was Provocation.

"Well!" he said.

So she *did* use perfume. And the same kind, too. But never for his benefit. She must wear it when she goes to the pictures on her own, he thought. And possibly when she took the dog for a walk late at night. . . .

The small bottle of perfume went on working like deadly poison in Mr. Pickering's mind. What a fool I've been, he thought.

No wonder she had drawn his attention to it in the car. She was anxious to dispel any suspicion that it was hers. And what was that she had said about liking to go to Maison Jones for coffee and cream buns? She had been altogether too anxious not to miss going into town. And why had she come across that piece of waste ground last night towards the car? Whom had she expected to be standing there in the shadows?

"Hah!" said Mr. Pickering. Now he could

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Ray Ellington, the three-in-one star

by NORMAN PHILLIPS

Jazz enthusiasts, dance-hall crowds, variety audiences—they all take to their hearts the singing drummer who learned to clown

EARLY IN HIS B.B.C. career a singing drummer named Ray Ellington stepped up to a microphone and, in his best Uncle Tom accents, announced: "Ah will now sing you a ballad of mah people that ah learned at mah pappy's knee when ah was a little piccaninny." A moment later, Ellington's gravelly voice broke into the strains of "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling."

More truth than poetry lies behind this gag, which established Ellington as a comedian as well as a musician. His father, Harry Brown, was a coloured entertainer from St. Louis, Missouri, and Ray was born on St. Patrick's Day—but in the London suburb of Kennington, eight doors from Charlie Chaplin's birthplace. To complicate matters, the baby's mother was a Russian who came from Omsk. This diverse ancestry has been a factor in gaining a comedy reputation for the Ray Ellington Quartet, in addition to the award of "the best small band in Europe."

The four men now earn about £300 a week—equivalent to the earnings of a fifteen-piece orchestra. The quartet is also an integral part of the B.B.C. *Goon Show* and has been heard by as many as 9,720,000 radio listeners on the *Forces All Star Bill*. Ellington and his men manage to hold the affection of three distinct sections of the entertainment business—youthful jazz enthusiasts, dance hall patrons and variety audiences.

Success in these different spheres is the result of careful planning, and was not achieved without difficulty. The quartet's first variety engagement—at the Finsbury Park Empire—was an unqualified flop. "The people just walked out on us," Ellington recalls. "After the second number there were only a few left in the stalls. We were giving them the same routines that had been a hit with the fans at Ted Heath's Sunday jazz concerts, but they just didn't go over in music hall. We switched the programme in mid-week, but we were too late. It took us a year to live it down."

Man With A Sunburned Voice

When the Ray Ellington Quartet returned to the variety stage it was with a carefully tailored production of evergreen numbers like "Teddy Bears' Picnic." "We'd learned," Ellington says, "that music hall patrons like songs they know—irrespective of what we do to the number."

What happens to a song at the hands of Ellington and his three colleagues is not always what the composer intended. Ellington's voice, sometimes described as "sunburned," ranges from raucous bellows to seductive whispers. "We used to say that Ray had a strong vibrato," says Charles Chilton, a B.B.C. producer, "and that if he didn't know which note to sing, he'd sing them both."

Chilton's unflattering description dates from a B.B.C. show called *Rhubarb Room*, a fictional cabaret known as "London's shabbiest night club." The programme featured the Ray Ellington Quartet and gave Ray a few lines to speak. "We had to give him lines," Chilton recalls, "because we couldn't afford actors. Ray surprised everyone by displaying a strong comedy sense."

Ellington's sense of humour frequently finds expression in his brown eyes, set in aristocratic Russian features inherited from his mother. He is six feet tall, with a forty-nine and a half inch chest and sixteen and a half inch biceps.

These measurements are the product of the one deadly serious side of Ray's nature—his devotion to the cult of body-building. Ellington was converted to this hobby by a glowing newspaper advertisement. He sent for a course of instruction, and later took up weight-lifting. Now his muscles get a three-hour workout in a gymnasium three times a week, and practically no padding is necessary in any of the two dozen £45 suits that hang in his wardrobe.

Ellington's weight-lifting activities are normally viewed tolerantly by the other three members of the band, but during a recent tour of Sweden, railway porters refused to shoulder their leader's two hundred pounds of assorted weights, and the musicians had to carry them.

Swedish audiences pleased the band because they did not insist on strict tempo. In English dance halls, tempo is taken so seriously that the quartet's pianist, Dick Katz, keeps a metronome beating on his piano. "Some people," Ellington says, "even time the beats in a bar, and complain if the orchestra isn't keeping strict tempo."

Dick Katz is an able arranger and a shrewd business man. In addition to playing the piano, he handles the group's affairs, from transport and accommodation to contracts. The band is a limited liability company, with each member holding shares.

Bowing To A Timetable

Katz's quiet efficiency supplements Ellington's colourful exuberance, and helps to explain the band's commercial success. Ellington and Katz are the only original members of the quartet, and they were responsible for the early decision to rehearse for six months before seeking a first engagement.

During the rehearsal period, Ellington asked Buddy Bradley to groom the quartet's stage presentation. Bradley was brought to London from Pittsburgh as a dance director by the late C. B. Cochran, and stayed to coach such stars as Alicia Markova, Robertson Hare, Googie Withers and Anton Dolin. Bradley told the quartet what to do while they were playing, organized their stage clowning, and timed every moment of the act—including bows.

"You have to do something more than sing or make music," Ellington says. "Nat 'King' Cole came here from America with a tremendous reputation, but he died a terrible death on British music halls because his act had no movement. We're moving all the time."

In addition to coaching the quartet, Bradley is also one of Ellington's boon companions and a frequent conspirator with the orchestra leader in complicated practical jokes. At Christmas, when a song called "The Maharaja of Mogador" was popular, Ellington, Bradley and a harmonica player named Max Geldray booked a box at the Princes Theatre and let it be known that it was for the Maharaja of Mogador. In fact, the plot was to surprise Christine Norden, who was appearing as principal boy in pantomime at the Princes.

His Nose Gave Him Away

Turned out in resplendent costumes, Ellington and his friends entered the box just before the curtain went up. Their jewelled turbans flashing, they exchanged bows with people in the stalls who mistook them for visiting potentates. A message was sent backstage to inform Miss Norden that the maharaja had come all the way from India to watch her performance.

Christine's first entrance was the signal for loud cheers from the pseudo maharaja and his aides. The principal boy ventured one look at the box and immediately recognized Ellington's distinctive aquiline nose. According to Bradley, she was able to carry on only by studiously ignoring the existence of the box and its gaudy occupants.

Ellington's practical jokes occasionally backfire; this recently happened while the band was playing at London's Café de Paris. One Saturday night, the exuberant leader bounced

Ellington playing the "bongoes." His triple success has needed careful planning. At his first variety show, the audience walked out

Ray signs photographs for his admirers. What happens to a song at his hands is not always what the composer intended. But the fans are delighted

into the restaurant with a late edition of an evening newspaper. The moment a waiter appeared, he rose excitedly from his seat. "I've done it," he cried, pointing to the football results. "I'm up on the penny points."

In fact, though Ellington is a keen gambler in the pools, his total winnings amount to only three shillings—and that was shared with Laurie Deniz, his guitarist. However, it amused Ellington to see the stir caused by his hoax. A few days later he said he had just received a cheque for £40,000. To add strength to the hoax, he bought champagne for all the waiters.

Things got out of hand as the rumour spread. Ellington's fan mail increased suddenly as begging letters began to appear. The climax came when burglars broke into his Highgate flat.

Since the burglary, Ellington has been issuing frantic denials of any pools success. "I still don't know what to believe," says Ted Heath. "Most of my orchestra was taken in by Ray. Why, he even showed us a block of flats that he claimed to have bought with his winnings."

Ellington's sense of humour is probably inherited from his father, Harry Brown, who came to Britain before the first World War. Young Ray became an actor at the age of twelve, when he appeared in the musical comedy *Virginia*. Two years later he played the juvenile star in *All God's Chillun Got Wings*. When the show closed, his mother apprenticed him to a cabinet maker. Instead of making furniture, the boy used his skill with wood to fashion drum sticks. His mother capitulated and, abandoning hope of Ray ever becoming a craftsman, bought him his first set of drums.

By the time war broke out, Ellington was an accomplished drummer. He joined the R.A.F., became a physical training instructor and ended up driving heavy lorries between London and Scotland. He spent every leave he could in London, preferably with his drums in a night club.

One stroke of luck was a posting to an R.A.F. unit in London. He promptly offered his services to Maurice Winnick, whose orchestra was playing at Ciro's. Each evening, L.A.C. Ellington reported to the night club and illegally exchanged uniform for evening dress. All went well until, one evening, the C.O. and his wife visited the club.

Jazz Rhythms On Wheel

"I ducked out of sight," Ray recalls, "but the C.O. had spotted me. Next morning the squadron was on parade and I was called out. The C.O. asked me if I didn't know it was against orders to appear in public out of uniform. I apologized and promised it wouldn't happen again.

"'I don't think it will,' said the C.O. That same day he posted me to Arbroath."

Wherever he was posted, Ellington would organize small groups "just for kicks." While he was at the Pathfinder base at Warboys, Huntingdonshire, he was in charge of a crash tender stationed on the airfield waiting for the bombers to return from Germany. Sitting behind the steering wheel, Ellington whiled away the hours by beating out rhythms with his hands. When he ran out of songs, he played around with nursery rhymes, rearranging the phrasing and the tempo. As soon as he came off duty at five in the morning he would dash to the barracks and spend the next three hours writing out the arrangements. "The Three Bears," "Goldilocks," and "Old Mother Hubbard" all received jazz treatment, and Ellington saved the arrangements until he achieved his postwar goal of a small band.

As a singer and drummer, he was beginning to earn a name for himself on the B.B.C. when he encountered a group calling themselves the Caribbean Trio. The trio had no drummer, so they merged as the Ray Ellington Quartet. After six months' rehearsal the group made a hit with "The Three Bears."

Although he still plays the drums, Ellington tends to spend more time in clowning or singing. The drums that he likes best are called bongoes, and look like two inverted flower pots strapped side by side. They are a South American type, played with finger tips and bare hands, and Ray learned to use them while touring South America with Harry Roy's orchestra.

Harry Roy played in the big hotels in the Latin American cities. However, Ellington found time to slip away to small dockside cafés. The patrons, like Ellington, were so entranced with Brazilian rhythms that once they even ignored an incident in which one man pulled out a revolver and shot his companion dead.

"I was the only one who was horrified," Ellington says. "No one else paid any attention to it. Two waiters dragged the body out, and the band played on."

Ellington was so impressed by this demonstration that he went out, bought himself a pair of bongoes and learned to play Brazilian style. Since then, he has beaten his own way to fame—without a shot being fired. THE END

Outside the pub, Delaney went into action. The Mystery Man, he explained, was a "super sportsman," relying on their generosity. They lapped it up

HERE COMES THE CRAWLING WONDER!

by WILL SCOTT

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

Suckers to the left of him, suckers to the right of him, and miles and miles and miles of easy money...

ALFY DID WHAT the boss said until he was thirty-six, then he took a little pub outside the town. It was more or less his wife's idea. She said she liked a man to have ambition and be his own master. She said only mugs worked.

It was all very nice for a start, but after a year or two Alfy began to have his doubts. It wasn't only what he had to do, though there was more of that than he'd ever thought there would be.

The real trouble was that there wasn't the money in it. Every Budget seemed to put another penny on the stuff. And there were pennies going on everything else, here and there. Some nights the only person in the taproom was Alfy himself. And he had to stay there till Time.

When he did a gentle grumble, his wife used to say, "It'll get better, Alfy, you'll see. We've only got to sit tight. The weekends are all right—we're rushed off our feet. And after all, it isn't like when you were at Sandford and Binks. You're your own boss now." That was always her line, and Alfy got tired of arguing.

But sometimes he couldn't sleep for worrying. He was always wondering what was going to happen next year, if things kept on like they were keeping on. He could see himself working as hard as ever for nothing at all. It wasn't as if he could do a wangle, like some of the customers who came into the saloon, from the look of them. Everything was invoiced and checked. You couldn't fiddle a shilling a year.

One morning, while Alfy was having a bad attack of the doubts, a cheerful man dropped in for a half-and-half. He was new to Alfy.

"Nice little house you've got here," he said.

"Ah," said Alfy.

"I always used to think I'd like to have a house like this," said the jolly man. "Not too busy, you know; with fields to look at. Nice and healthy."

"Ah," said Alfy.

"And you're your own boss—there's a lot in that," said the jolly man.

Alfy was glad the wife was busy out at the back. If she'd heard that bit she'd have given him one of her "There you are—what did I tell you!" looks.

The jolly man came back in the evening. He began to come every day. His name was Delaney, he said. He'd had something to do with a circus, but he was taking it easy for a bit.

Alfy and Delaney got to know each other quite well during the next week or two, and Alfy began to tell him some of the grim facts.

"It isn't as if you could make anything on

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JOURNEY INTO BRITAIN: Harry Hopkins reports from

THE VALE OF GREEN FINGERS

Evesham's fertile acres fill half England's larders. But it needed a special race of people to wring riches from the land

YOU LEAVE THE Fish Inn behind you on your right and you begin to coast down the wide bends of Broadway Hill and, suddenly, there is the Vale, the whole Vale, lying at your feet like the Promised Land—a vast green plain, soft and warmly sunlit, dotted with villages that cluster around square stone towers, flecked with the lighter green of the willows marking the meanderings of the river Avon.

There ought to be the sound of distant church bells, drifting upwards; instead, there is the grinding transmission of a British Road Services lorry, loaded high with brussels sprouts.

You roll down the last shoulder of the Cotswolds, down the last of those long stone-built main streets, monuments to a richer, vanished past, and then, within minutes, you are passing through a very different land, a countryside that is strictly contemporary, almost suburban.

The earth is groomed here like a small boy got ready for a party. Green lines of lettuces and spring onions and leeks stretch off towards the horizon, scaling down open fields into neat geometrical patterns. Modest bungalows, Oakdenes and Loch Lomonds, range in sedate groups along the roads. There are gas lamps at dark corners, and council houses in three or four vintages, from 1911 to 1950.

Relentless Green Lines

Small cars stand, rather forlornly, in the gateways to the fields and, when you look beyond them, you see three or four figures in overalls or denims, bending over the earth, little brown knots, moving along the relentless green lines of growing vegetables.

The men wear cloth caps and are brown and lean, perhaps a little dour. There is a certain challenge in their eyes: a "don't-give-a-damn-for-you-or-anybody-else" look about them. They are a rather special body of men: the nearest we have yet got in this island to a British peasantry. By dint of gruelling labour and much belt-tightening they have won their way, not to three acres and a cow, but to six acres and a greenhouse.

The transition from rural to urban is hardly perceptible. A roundabout, a junction of roads, and you are running down the long narrow main street to the Avon Bridge in Evesham, and up, threading through the traffic, through the busy shopping street on the other bank.

At the foot of the steep valley, dividing the town into halves, is the "tourist's view" of Evesham—the placid river swinging into the great bend that contains the town, swans, the white boathouse and, beyond the riverside curtain of limes, crowning the smooth grass slope, the bell tower of the Abbey, majestic, four-square, the hub and centre of the Vale.

Remnants Of Greatness

It is twelve hundred years since Eoves, the swineherd, feeding his pigs on the Avon's bank, was dazzled by his vision of the Madonna and her two attendants, *"her raiment exceeding lilies in whiteness and roses in odour"*; twelve hundred years since Egwin, the good bishop of Worcester, hastening to the river bank, saw the vision in his turn and, upon the hallowed spot, began forthwith the building of a monastery.

Thanks to Henry VIII and his vigorous monastic liquidators, all that remains today of that once great Abbey is a crumbling gateway, a wall, and the fine bell tower built by Clement

The glory of springtime in The Vale. Its heart is bustling Evesham, waxing prosperous on its twin industries—tourists and market gardening

Evesham's central market. The individualism of the growers is their strength. But it has also prevented them from finding a way through to a constructive solution of their marketing problems

Beside the Avon: Pixie Cross, daughter of an Evesham lawyer.

Lichfield, the last of the abbots. But the pattern of life shaped by the monks, the first market gardeners, still lies upon the Vale.

And, just north of the bell tower, the two churches the monks built—All Saints and St. Laurence's; the one, it is said, for townsfolk, the other for pilgrims—still lie side by side.

All Saints is High Church, St. Laurence's is Low—but both share Canon Charles Jones. "On Sundays," says the versatile vicar, explaining this ecclesiastical phenomenon, which might well confound more theologically-minded nations, "the people pour into the Abbey ground like a river, dividing just inside the gate into two streams, one to one church, one to the other. Then, on the way out"—a sweeping gesture of the hands—"the streams come together again. Sometimes families divide, the husband goes to one church, the wife to another. It's all quite amicable, you understand."

Their Monday Morning Tune

The clock in the bell tower chimed the hour, there was a moment's silence—and the notes of "Come Lassies and Lads," picked out on the carillon, were drifting over the Vale. "We thought the tune most appropriate for dispelling the Monday morning feeling," explained the vicar. "For Saturdays, of course, we have 'Home Sweet Home.' We've a pretty good rowing club here, so we settled on the 'Eton Boating Song' for Wednesdays, and, for Thursdays, the leader-writer of the *Evesham Journal*, a great mountaineer, stood out for 'Cader Idris.' We were most anxious to have 'The Farmer's Boy'—but that has half-tones. It seems you can't have half-tones on bells."

Evesham is busy and bustling, its long High Street lined with parked cars. Gumboots dangle in rows around the shoe shop windows; fruit and produce merchants talk their strange language down office telephones; the bottle-glass panes gleam in Ye Olde Café windows.

Out of the big cream motor coaches pour the trippers from Birmingham and the Black Country; out of the little black cars step men in heavy, muddy boots on their way to see the canners, the grocers, the fertilizer merchants and fruit-basket makers and machinery repairers. And on its twin industries—tourists and market gardening—Evesham waxes prosperous, and grows to a provincial stature transcending its eleven thousand inhabitants.

Joining Three Counties

The mainspring of this prosperity, the Vale, is a vague, slightly mysterious area, which belongs almost as much to the mind and the spirit as to geography. Three beautiful English counties, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, rub shoulders there, have a part in its making. For these days, the sprouts begin on the Cotswold escarpment; the first gleam of glass flashes out not far west of Shakespeare's Stratford, and the gardens and orchards run on, strung on the serpentine thread of the Avon, all the way to Pershore and the tree-covered hump of Bredon Hill..

But now, as ever, the heart of the Vale lies in the cosy network of small villages that nestles around Evesham in its great bend in the Avon as brown earth-covered tubers cluster round a root. They are ancient villages, unspoiled, yet unpampered, where Warwickshire black-and-white mingles pleasantly with grey Cotswold stone and warm old Worcestershire brick. Yet they are not moribund but alive; and, because they are alive, the new rubs shoulders with the old in the incongruity which may not belong to the antique shops, but certainly belongs to Life.

There is Middle Littleton—middle between North Littleton and South Littleton—with its great medieval tithe barn behind its ancient church and Elizabethan manor house, a massive stone structure buttressed like a cathedral, its high roof of grey Cotswold tiles crowned by crosses, a treasure house where the old abbot of Evesham stowed away the fruits of the earth.

Yet, half a mile away, there is a new modern school, and just in front of that the grouped warehouses of the Littleton and Badsey Growers, the market gardeners' co-operative, which, starting out in 1908 with a capital of £104 and much high courage, today runs a fleet of fourteen lorries, and offers its 1,200 members every service from soil analysis to marketing.

A couple of miles to the south lies Bretforton (pop: 766) where Lola Taplin keeps the half-timbered Fleece Inn which has been in her family for five hundred years, displaying to Bette Davies and Ramon Navarro and lesser Americans the forty-eight-piece pewter dinner service that has stood on the dresser for much of that time. Across the village green lies the thirteenth-century church, and just beyond that the fine grey manor house where Squire Ashwins have lived since 1543.

And then, only a stone's throw away, are a couple of lines of white council houses, in the latest idiom of the 1950s, with front doors of delicate pastel blue.

The "Gilt-edged" Crop

At the end of one row of council houses, comparatively insignificant, stands—end on to the road—a small brick cottage of earlier vintage where a television aerial rises from the chimney stack. This is Sandy Bank. And Sandy Bank, as everyone in Bretforton knows, is where John Hall lives.

The door stands ajar; but the cottage is empty. John Hall is away at the top of his "cut," a gaunt lumbering figure looming, just now, from a curtain of thick grey smoke. He is burning dead asparagus "bower," the high tawny fern, decorated in autumn with red berries bright as birds' eyes, which is the mildly astonishing outcome of the asparagus shoots of the dinner-table. He pauses, a forkful poised over the fire. "Been waiting weeks for this chance," he says. "Won't burn till it's ripe."

For the Vale's small growers, asparagus beds have long represented the "gilt-edged" of their highly speculative trade. Lettuce may have to be ploughed in; plum-trees, they say, demand not enough frost to cause a large fall, yet enough

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM KEMP

To open the river as far as the sea, the sum of £20,000 is needed; half has been raised

to prevent a disastrous glut, like 1952's; last year broad beans "sold like salmon," but the public is fickle: this year they may sell more like broad beans. Only asparagus, the small growers' sheet anchor, can be relied on, year after year, to bring in the money.

Not, however, easy money. For this pale aristocrat of the dinner-table is a tyrant, disdaining machinery, exacting a vast amount of back-breaking toil, stooping to fork down the beds in autumn, stooping to pack the soil again in the spring, stooping to free the roots of weeds, to plunge into the soil the cleft-headed cutting knife, nicely judging the position of the shoot, washing, grading, tying with twisted withies.

Long Haul To Freedom

The Vale men accept the burden gratefully. In autumn, the brittle feathery "bower" tints the great open fields in oblongs and rectangles of elusive fawn; in spring the flat-topped ridges of the asparagus beds are a regular note in the pattern of the soil. From this little village of Bretforton alone, before the war, came one-tenth of all the asparagus grown in Britain.

"Let her blow up a bit," John Hall shouts to Desmond Toms, the young lad who helps him. His speech is slow and ponderous, but there is a lilt in it, and it rolls along on those round, warm vowels which will grow rounder and warmer now as one travels down the Avon and the Severn towards the sea and the west.

Thirty years ago, John Hall, like most of the growers around here, was a labourer, getting 15s. a week. Then, soon after the first world war, he took on his first bit of ground, the beginning of the long hard haul to independence. Today he is the master of six acres, about the average round here. But—as is also usual—these six acres do not all lie together compactly behind the cottage where the bonfire smoulders, but are scattered in three separate "cuts" around the district. The long straight lines of growing things stretch on towards the horizon; but Hall's land ends at that ditch. The rest is a complicated invisible patchwork of other growers' "cuts," to which they must sometimes travel miles from other villages.

"Chap was here last week," rumbled John Hall. "Said: 'You ought to block out this land, you know.' " A deep chuckle shook him. "I said: 'Why, you'd have a riot in the village.' " For this odd twentieth-century reversion to the Open Field System of the Middle Ages (and the school history books), this strange reproduction in Britain of the "fragmentation" which is the curse of Indian agriculture, goes to the roots of life in the Vale.

"I remember, when I was a boy," relates John Hall, "there were nothing but farms here." Came the agricultural depression of the seventies. Cheap food flooded in from overseas to a Britain where the factory owners now had the upper hand. "I recall the days when good men had to leave these villages to find work," goes on Hall.

Drift To Towns Halted

But John Hall did not leave; nor did many others. The drift to the towns—later to become a permanent feature of English life—was halted in the Vale. The tradition of market gardening, long ago established by the monks of Evesham Abbey, consolidated in the seventeenth century by a retired Genoese ambassador named Bernardi, who spent £30,000 in the Vale indulging his horticultural hobby, saved the day. The labourers, turned off the farms, took a sliver of land. Tightening their belts, they kept themselves alive on it. With much labour they even made a few pence. And, as the years went by, they took on a bit more land. And a bit more.

Paradoxically, most of the small growers are tenants: but they are tenants secured by the Magna Charta of the Vale — the Evesham Custom. The Evesham Custom allows a tenant to choose his successor on his holding; allows him, furthermore, to receive from this successor substantial payment for the value of the asparagus beds he has laid down (they last from ten to fifteen years), for his fruit trees, for the fertility he has put into the soil.

The "Runnymede" of the Vale, finally confirming the Custom, occurred in 1872, when Squire Rudge of Evesham dispatched notices to quit to a number of small growers who rented his land. But the tenants had planted fruit trees which were just then coming into full bearing. They deputed the handling of their case to one of their number, Joseph Masters. In measured but determined language, Masters addressed the Squire. The men, he wrote, faced not merely loss, but ruin. They would have to emigrate. The squire was setting at nought long-hallowed local custom.

Abashed, the squire withdrew his notices and was duly presented by his relieved tenants with a silver inkstand. And still today, despite the advent of county council holdings, which bulk large in the Vale, the Custom holds place in the Valeman's mind with Habeas Corpus and other historic liberties of the true-born Englishman.

Land Of Lively Villages

And there is still a Rudge at the manor house, and a fruit-grower named Masters, though Councillor Fred Masters, the Liberator's grandson—and Evesham's mayor in 1946—is a merchant, too, these days, well known for the selected saplings he develops for other growers' orchards.

The phlegmatic exterior of the Vale people conceals a lively village democracy, concerned perhaps little with the affairs of the nation, but much with the affairs of the Vale. Village halls are everywhere, and everywhere abustle. John Hall, for instance, is a J.P. and sits on the Evesham Bench. His Friday mornings are reserved for the sittings of the Littleton and Badsey Growers' executive, of which he is a member.

Yet all the help he has on his six acres is one lad—and his wife, who gives a hand tying the asparagus in the cutting season. That is the

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Man who brought new ideas from Holland: Arie Boers and his children inspect his cucumbers

In Bretforton's Fleece Inn, Lola Taplin laughs with John Hall. Behind her is Peter Tomkins

The Maras Affair

by ***ELIOT REED***

ILLUSTRATED BY GEORGE DITTON

This was it—the terror he had foreseen. Only one thing mattered: to get Anna out of danger

CHARLES BURTON, a British newspaperman in an Iron Curtain country, was being watched by the police. One of his reporters, a man called Trovic, had disappeared. Police Commissioner Sesnik seemed to think he had escaped across the frontier.

Trovic: the name rang only a faint bell in Burton's mind. But it obviously meant a lot to his secretary, Anna Maras, and his assistant, Sokolny. Sokolny was always full of escape stories, but the name "Trovic" shut him up like a clam. There was an atmosphere in the office you could cut with a knife.

Burton was used to this sort of thing, of course. Often he had wanted to throw up this job out of sheer exasperation. He'd only hung on to it because of his hunch that a big story was going to break soon. . . . No; that wasn't true. The real reason was Anna. She was disturbingly lovely. There had been the beginning of a romance between them. But now she was withdrawn, defensive: there was so much to be afraid of in this fear-ridden country.

One night, to relieve the tension, he took her to the ballet. It was her friend Babette Trepleva's début in *Swan Lake*. Anna seemed gay, relaxed: he felt relieved. But his relief did not last long. Anna went backstage to see Babette—and did not come back. After the show, he saw her being hustled into a car which drove off at high speed.

Burton was dumbfounded. Suddenly he sensed danger. Combing the city to find her, he learnt that she had gone into hiding. She was afraid the police were going to make Sokolny talk—about Trovic. . . .

In a hotel bar, Burton saw Sokolny lying across a table, very drunk. With him was Sesnik. The moon-faced police chief was extremely affable, but he had obviously been pumping Sokolny for information.

Next morning Burton tackled Sokolny about escape organizations. The man wa evasive: for answer, he offered Burton his watch as an introduction to a man called Dovinye. Burton said he would wait till he needed it.

Late that night, Anna came out of hiding. She and Burton returned to the office, where Sokolny was working late. They found him slumped across his desk. But this time he wasn't drunk. He was dead.

PART 2

Police Call

BURTON was a step inside the room. He called sharply to Anna to keep out, but was too late. He wheeled and took hold of her, and she was trembling helplessly. He held her in his arms, and she clung tightly to him, pressing her face against him. He drew her into the outer office and closed the door behind him.

"I'm all right now," she said, after a moment. "I didn't think I could be so weak."

He made her sit in an armchair. He saw the chalky pallor of her face.

"I knew it would happen." She looked up with dread and sorrow in her eyes. "I wanted to save him. I wanted to. I told them. . . ."

He went back into his office and took a bottle of whisky from a drawer of his desk. He poured a stiff glass and made the girl drain it. Then he picked up the telephone and called the Police Judiciary.

When he had put the phone down, he stood behind her and closed a hand on her right shoulder.

"It is so cruel." She reached up to clasp his hand. "I hoped there would be no more of it. Now I can see only murder in their hearts. They can't be saved from themselves."

Burton did not ask her what she meant. He scarcely heard her words. He was thinking that whatever it was, this thing that had started, it would bring her into danger, and he had, somehow, to get her out of it.

He freed his hand from her grasp and once more returned to the inner office. He went to the desk, moving carefully, avoiding the revolver that had fallen to the floor. He lifted Sokolny's left arm and took the watch from the wrist.

THE place was overrun. Police in smart tunics and polished leggings marched up the stairs and along the corridor. They stood guard in the vestibule and on the landing and at the door of the outer office. But these were merely the chorus boys. They fell back before a cast of principals that included photographers, fingerprint experts, a surgeon, and several stern-faced investigators from the higher categories. The unimportant Sokolny was being vastly honoured in death.

Difficulties at once beset Burton. The police had brought along every kind of specialist except an interpreter, and the only foreign language any of them had was German. That was of no use to Burton. He did his best to answer them in their own tongue, but the result seemed of little use to them. When he suggested that Anna might interpret, they looked at him scornfully. What sort of fools did he think they were? They hurried Anna into the outer office and closed the door so that she would not hear what her accomplice said.

It seemed obvious, from the grim, demanding tone of the incomprehensible questions, that they were satisfied about his guilt. Things became more confusing. When they howled at him, he roared back at them. What did they think he was going to do—confess to a murder of which he was entirely innocent? No, they said, no, no, no; and he took that to be a rejection of his claim.

Hearing the scream, Burton instinctively caught

"Bring Sesnik here," he insisted. "Sesnik, Sesnik, Sesnik!" he stormed.

Sesnik, at least, he knew; the man could talk English. They paid no attention to him.

A man named Jaffke appeared to be in charge, a tall, lean, alert man with calculating eyes.

Anna was at last brought into the room.

"These fools can't understand anything," Burton complained to her. "Tell them. . . ."

Several voices shouted at him, Jaffke made a small gesture, and Burton was marched into the outer office, where, through the closed door, he could hear the sounds of question and answer. He strained to catch a word, even a name, but nothing articulate came through the barrier, and he could judge only that Anna was quite controlled and that they were treating her with some courtesy.

He found himself sweating freely and reached into his jacket pocket for a handkerchief. His hand touched the watch. He withdrew the hand

Anna to him. They both looked up and saw a man leaping on to the balustrade. It was Trovic He flung something violently into the president's box

quickly. The two guards in the room with him stared at him coldly.

The murmur of voices went on behind the closed door for nearly a quarter of an hour, and then an interpreter arrived, and Burton himself was taken into the room.

They had placed Anna in a chair close to the window and a group round her was just breaking up. She was pale and evidently weary, but he could see no trace of fear in her eyes when she looked across the room at him.

Jaffke gave a languid signal that he was done, and then it was Burton's turn. They left Anna in her chair and grouped themselves round him, three men and the interpreter, but Jaffke stood aside, listening and watching Anna.

HAVING a borrowed voice, Burton had full assurance again. He protested that it was an outrage that Miss Maras should be subjected needlessly to detention in this room. He demanded to know why Sesnik was not here.

Protest and demand fell into a vacuum. There was a suggestion in the air of tedium, of anticlimax, as if everything had already been settled. The questions sounded perfunctory when first put, and they certainly took no life from the efforts of the interpreter. Burton described exactly what had happened from the time he left Sokolny in the office to his return from Tolnitz and the discovery of the body.

The blankness of Jaffke and the others began to cut through his assurance.

"I tell you someone came to the office just before we arrived," he repeated. "There was melted snow on the floor when we came in and it hadn't started to snow until a few minutes before. It was the first thing Miss Maras noticed. She drew my attention to it."

Anna spoke after the interpreter. She spoke quickly, almost urgently, but Burton had to wait for the translation.

"The lady make answer that the little water pools might have been spilt from a glass."

Anna said: "Sokolny may have gone downstairs for something."

"But Anna, you were the first. . . ."

Jaffke broke in sharply, silencing him. The interpreter explained: "The colonel say 'Enough.' You make answer only to questions. Then you be quiet."

"I'm damned if I will," Burton exploded. "You tell him to get Sesnik here."

ANNA intervened again. "No. There is no need to trouble Commissioner Sesnik tonight. It is all settled. It is clear to Col[illegible] Jaffke that——"

The great man cut off what was clear to him with a gesture. Burton stared at Anna but could find no hint of an explanation in her face. He turned to the interpreter.

"How is it settled?"

"Settled? I have not see this word." The man struggled more with his English, wearied by the effort. "It is most simple, this case. Sokolny makes the suicide."

"Suicide!" The echo came from the doorway in a familiar, unmistakable voice. The bassoon had joined the concert. "Poor fellow." Sesnik waddled towards the desk. "He could not suffer the pain of his teeth any longer. It is

In the street and the driving snow, Burton said: "This is the only place where we can talk. The office may have been wired for microphones"

understandable, Mr. Burton. But it is a drastic cure to blow one's brains out."

The newcomer exchanged nods with Jaffke and the two drew apart a little to talk. Burton looked at Anna again but her face was still expressionless. He hoped that he was as successful as she had been in concealing relief at this surprising verdict.

Sesnik, with a word that had a reedy impatience in it, left Jaffke and moved towards the window.

"My dear Anna," he said, "I am sorry that you have been subjected to this ordeal. I think, as Colonel Jaffke permits it, you should now go home. My car is at your service."

He gave an instruction to one of the uniformed men and escorted the girl to the door. She said good night to Burton as she passed, but there was still no signal in her eyes.

"How long is this invasion going to last?" Burton demanded.

"Not long," Sesnik said sympathetically. "It is Jaffke's responsibility; he is very thorough. I do not think you will be needed any more tonight. We know where to find you."

"I have a cable to send—the planning report. If Jaffke doesn't mind, I'll type it out and take it along with me."

Jaffke had no objection. Burton took the translation from Sokolny's desk and sat down at Anna's typewriter. When he had finished, he took the report along to the censor's office and then went to his hotel.

Sokolny's watch was no longer burning the lining of his pocket, but he wanted to be rid of it, and, after looking round his room, decided on the curtain rod. The ornamental end-pieces were detachable caps. The watch and strap fitted easily into the metal tube.

He had a wash, descended to the bar, and, sick of the stuff they called whisky, turned in a vodka. There was no one in the place and he felt an unusual craving to be among people. To settle down to a book or go to bed was out of the question, and, though he had not yet eaten, food had no appeal for him. The thought of it merely reminded him that he had promised to take Anna to dinner.

He was worried about her and wanted to talk to her, yet felt that now he must keep away. Whether or not the police really believed in the suicide idea, they would be wondering about the implications of Sokolny's death, and it was essential to avoid suggesting to them that there was anything collusive in his relationship with Anna. He must stick to his usual routine.

The Metropole was routine. He trudged over there, but the place was dead; it usually was until the theatres were out. The band was playing in a lifeless way and a few couples on the floor moved like zombies. Burton shook himself. The funereal mood was his alone, perhaps.

Settembrini the photographer came in. Settembrini was always talkative and sometimes amusing.

"Have you seen the programme for the gala night at the Opera?" he inquired. "I hear that President Riecke wanted a spot of Wagner, but I suspect that even the *Meistersinger* overture would be classed as deviationist. We're going all pan-Slav. *Les Sylphides,* the haunting scene from *Boris,* an excerpt from *Eugene Onegin* and some ballet from Rimsky to wind up with."

He went on talking. Burton listened absently.

"Kurtz is still having trouble with her knee. I believe they're going to give that new child the honour. Babette something-or-other."

Burton got up.

Settembrini asked: "What's the matter with you tonight?"

"I must go back to the office. Sorry."

Jaffke and his entourage had withdrawn, taking Sokolny with them, but Sesnik was still in the inner office. He lifted himself from the chair near the window.

"I thought you might return," he said. "I've been waiting for you."

"Why?" Burton was not amiable.

"Merely out of friendship. There are ways in which I might help you."

"I don't see that I need any help," Burton retorted.

"We all need help. In your case, there is the problem of finding a successor to Sokolny."

"I'll do without a successor, thanks. Miss Maras and I can manage perfectly well."

"No, no! I shall see that you get an excellent man. One who will be more useful."

"To me, or to you?"

Sesnik sighed. "You are so mistrustful, my dear fellow. I wish only to be friendly. I have always a liking for men of your country."

Burton felt himself beginning to get angry again. "Listen, Sesnik! You've been pestering me ever since you called me to your office about Trovic. I've given you all the information I could find in the records."

"I believe you." His tone was sad. "You have done no wrong, but others have used you and this office, and it is a little unfortunate that Sokolny is found dead in your own room. He might have chosen a more convenient spot."

"Perhaps you think I killed him? If I had, I would certainly have chosen a more convenient spot."

"Jaffke believes he committed suicide. . . ."

"And Jaffke is a fool!"

"It is possible, it is possible." Sesnik paused, frowning. "Perhaps, Mr. Burton, *you* can help *me.*"

Burton said nothing.

Sesnik went on: "At the Metropole last night Sokolny was wearing a watch on his left wrist. Tonight it was gone."

"Perhaps you would like to search me?"

"My dear friend! What an extraordinary suggestion! I merely wished to ask if you had observed the watch on Sokolny during the day; a cheap article in a chromium case?"

"He may have broken it and taken it to be repaired. He may have forgotten to put it on when he dressed. Why is it important?"

"I don't know. Any small thing may be important. This may have no significance at all, but I would like to know what has become of that watch."

"Why don't you have his lodging searched?"

"That has already been done. The watch was not found, so I'm inclined to argue that he must have been wearing it when he left home this morning."

"Where does the argument take you?"

"Nowhere. It is most inconvenient."

"Then why bother? You say that Sokolny

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Mr. Langdon rehearses the Coronation's 'merry noise'

by JOHN ENNIS

On June 2, nearly 40,000 bell-ringers will be ready to acclaim the Queen. They need stamina, horny hands—and quick wits

AT TEN MINUTES TO ONE on the morning of Whit Monday, 1923, about 150 men gathered in the byways of Southwark, south-east London. Until seven o'clock that evening they walked the streets or sat in cafés and public houses, all the time listening to the pealing of twelve bells in the tower of Southwark Cathedral.

The men were bell-ringers from many parts of Britain, gathered to act as umpires in a marathon peal by twelve members of the world's foremost bell-ringing society, the Ancient Society of College Youths.

High in the ringing chamber, Herbert Langdon, a London shipping agent, conducted the peal, periodically calling "Bob!" or "Single!" to send the ringers off on a new set of variations. For nine hours and forty-five minutes his friend, Alfred Peck, pulled the rope that swung the heaviest bell, the fifty-hundredweight tenor. "In all that time we could not eat, drink—or even scratch our noses," they recall.

Their peal set up a new record for twelve bells. Each rope was pulled 12,675 times. The expert ears of the umpires in the streets could detect no faults and, soon after, a board was erected in Southwark Cathedral's ringing chamber to record the feat.

But there had, in fact, been a fault in the peal. Thirteen years later, one of the men who rang on that Whit Monday was browsing through the composer's figures, and he discovered that six consecutive changes had been repeated.

"Only six repeats out of 12,675—but it was enough," says Langdon. In the honourable tradition of bell-ringing, the Southwark men immediately disclaimed the record. A small plate fixed below the board in the ringing chamber now explains that the composition was found to be incorrect.

Took Part In Record Peal

Though they have never got over their disappointment, Alfred Peck and Herbert Langdon, now in their seventies, still ring church bells. They both took part in what remained for years the longest recorded peal by one team of men—21,363 changes on ten bells in twelve hours twenty-five minutes, at St. Lawrence's Church, Appleton, Berkshire, in 1922. In common with most of the 40,000 ringers in Britain, they will be ringing on Coronation Day—Langdon at St. Paul's, and Peck at Westminster Abbey.

The Abbey ringers, under their conductor, Harold N. Pitstow, a cashier, will push their way through the gathering crowds to the Abbey at 7 a.m. on June 2. They will pass through a small arched opening in the wall and climb 164 steps to the ringing chamber.

There they will stay until, about midday, they will be told by telephone that the Queen has been crowned. This is the signal for the eight bells (two of which were rung to announce victory over the Spanish Armada) to be "fired"—all clanged simultaneously for a few minutes. When the ceremony ends, the eight men will begin a peal of 5,040 changes that will take them more than three hours.

Woman Refused To Join

To pass the long morning hours they will visit the tower roof and look at the crowds. At the Coronation of King George VI, Pitstow was able to see the Royal Coach leaving the Palace and follow it intermittently all the way along the Mall. "I don't think I shall go up to the roof this time," he says. "I can't stand the height."

Falling off a tower is one of the smallest dangers in bell-ringing. Pitstow recalls that, many years ago, there were seven women ringers at Saffron Walden parish church, and they tried to persuade another woman to join them to make up a full band for the eight bells. She refused. "It is much too dangerous," she said.

Laughing at her fears, they invited her to watch the ringers in action. A visiting ringer

Now in his seventies, Herbert Langdon has rung bells for forty-eight years. He will join in the Coronation Day peal at St. Paul's, where he is master of the cathedral bell-ringers' guild

broke one of the fundamental rules—he moved his feet while the end of the rope was on the floor. It caught between his legs and swept him off his feet, and as he fell he knocked over the next man. The two ropes whipped about the chamber as the heavy bells swung uncontrolled.

As the visitor got to his feet and flopped on a form against the wall, one of the ropes coiled itself on the seat a second before he sat down, and as it jerked from under him he was once more flung to the floor. "The lady did not become a bell-ringer," says Pitstow. "It was just as if the Devil was loose in the belfry."

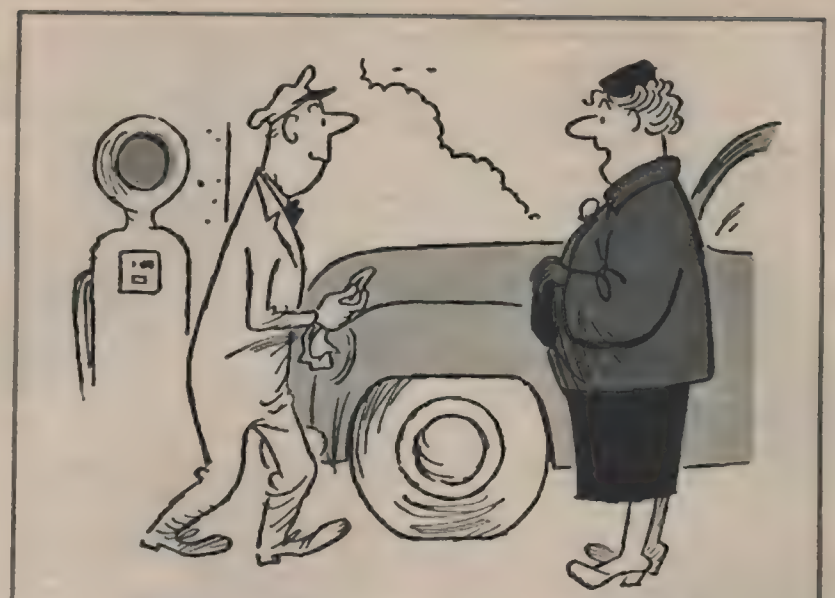
Recently, a man from Yeovil, a ringer who was on holiday in London, asked to be allowed to ring one of the bells at St. Paul's Cathedral. As he pulled the rope, the "stay"—a device that stops the bell from turning over and over—broke. The bell swung round and round, and the rope coiled round the wheel to which it is attached. There was no time for the man to think.

Ringer Hit The Roof

"As it happened, he did the wrong thing—he held on," says Herbert Langdon, who was there at the time. "He went up to the ceiling, then let go. He broke both ankles, and was unable to work for nine months."

Learners often make the mistake of holding the rope too slack. In the Saffron Walden ringing-chamber a learner once found the rope coiled round his neck. He stood rigid with fear. "It was a good job he did," says Harold Pitstow. "The rope gently uncoiled as it shot up. If he had moved he would have been hanged."

The *Oxford Companion To Music* describes change-ringing as "not so much a branch of music as mathematics athletically applied to the making of a merry noise." A change is rung when all the bells have sounded one after the other; the composers of bell music ensure that in each change the bells are rung in a different order, on the basis of mathematical permutations.



"There's something wrong with the windscreen—it hits me on the head every time I step on the brake"

A true "peal" must consist of at least five thousand changes. This number is just possible, without repetition, on seven bells, and it takes about three hours to ring. The possible number of changes on eight bells is 40,320, which would take more than a full day to ring. To ring the 479,001,600 changes that are possible on twelve bells would take thirty-eight years.

Some years ago, the ringers at Leeds, in Kent, approached their vicar. They wanted two additional bells to make the number up to ten. "On ten bells," the ringers explained, "we can ring more changes and get more variety."

"How many changes can you ring with the existing eight bells?" the vicar asked.

"Forty thousand, three hundred and twenty," they told him.

"And have you rung them all yet?" The ringers admitted they had not.

"Come and see me when you have rung them all, and we shall see about the other two," said the vicar, thinking he had heard the last of it.

One night, soon after this conversation, there was little sleep for the villagers. For more than twenty-four hours thirteen men, working in relays, rang the changes until they had sounded them all. The vicar was convinced.

Though the mental strain in change-ringing is considerable, the physical strain is not as great as it appears. Blisters on the hands are the ringers' chief grumble. The bell is turned mouth upward before ringing, and each tug on the rope needs only enough energy to ensure that the bell's weight carries it to the "up" position at the other end of its swing.

Smallwood once went to St. Mary's Church, Whitechapel, to ring a "touch"—the name given by ringers to anything less than a full peal. He and his companions were delighted to find that the bells had been left up and that they were saved the task of raising them.

Their delight turned to anguish as they heaved the ropes. The bells had been up for a week, and were full of slushy snow which poured down on the ringers. "We all had to go home for a bath," says Smallwood.

Used Invisible Bells

During part of the second World War the ringing of church bells was banned, the "merry noise" being saved for warning of invasion. In some churches, to enable ringers to keep in practice, an ingenious device caused tiny bells to tinkle as the huge bells swung silently, their clappers tied.

Many ringers practise on handbells, but Alfred Peck points out that sound is not necessary to the expert. He recalls an outing where ringers in a train "rang" hundreds of handbell changes by simply moving their arms in the correct order as if they were holding invisible bells.

Peck, Langdon and Smallwood were among a chosen band who went to Liverpool in 1951 to ring the first touch on the new bells in Liverpool Cathedral. For the first time in their lives these men, who have walked up thousands of belfry steps, were at a church with a lift to the ringing-chamber.

They arrived to find that an electrical failure had put it out of action. Philosophically they walked up three hundred steps—in the dark. THE END

UNBROKEN

Continued from page 9

surface vessels. Even so, despite the feeling of well-being that followed the heavy dinner cooked by Able Seaman Bramhall in his cubbyhole of a galley, there was no real slackening of pace.

While those off watch were able to sleep and sigh over their pin-ups, there was plenty of work for those on duty. The main electric batteries had to be recharged, and cylinders were refilled with compressed air that enabled us to surface. Men were on watch by the pumps, torpedo tubes and cooling machinery.

The wireless officer received and decoded signals. An electrical rating toured the boat checking and testing battery readings. On the bridge, an officer and two ratings scanned sea and sky, while helmsman, asdic operator, petty officer of the watch, duty engine-room artificer, messenger and "spare hand" were crowded into a control-room hardly bigger than a garden shed.

Nonetheless, for a submarine at sea in wartime we were as relaxed as ever we could be.

Made A Brave Sight

It was a fine, calm day when Unbroken approached the Pillars of Hercules, slipped into Algeciras Bay and glimpsed Gibraltar town nestling at the foot of the fortress. In the foreground were the familiar long moles of the artificial harbour; alongside the moles the ships of Force H—the old battle-cruiser Renown, the battleship Rodney, the aircraft carrier Eagle, and a handful of destroyers. In the southern corner of the basin, by the dry docks, the submarine depot ship Maidstone, our temporary home. This small force was all we had to defend the Western Mediterranean and a large slice of the Atlantic against all comers—German, Italian and, if need be, Vichy French.

I felt we made a brave sight as we entered harbour. Our grey paint had held, and a brand new ensign, many sizes too large, flew from our tiny mast-head. The sailors shared my pride in the occasion, and stood as stiff as marines as they lined the casing in their bell-bottoms and white, roll-neck jerseys. We passed the towering sides of Renown, Rodney and Eagle, bos'ns' pipes shrilling in salute, smug in the knowledge that, despite their comparative enormity, we could destroy any one of them with a minimum of effort. Without their escorting destroyers they were powerless against a submarine—even against the undersized Unbroken, half the displacement of the average. For a young lieutenant it was a satisfying thought.

Floating Dockyard

The depot ship Maidstone, to which we secured, was a floating dockyard equipped with torpedoes, ammunition, water, oil, food, spare parts and all the essentials for repair work. Aboard her were engineers, electricians, artificers, shipwrights, doctors and even a dentist: all with magnificently equipped workshops, foundries and surgeries.

Business was slack aboard Maidstone when we arrived. She had no flotilla of her own to mother, but acted as a sort of Clapham Junction for submarines entering and leaving the Mediterranean, travelling from Britain to Africa, and from Africa to Britain. She was responsible, also, for a couple of transport submarines running supplies to beleaguered Malta.

As I climbed the ladder up her side, I hoped we would be allowed one "working up" patrol from Gib before being sent into the Med, but Captain G. A. W. Voelcker, her commanding officer, had some shocks for me. As he paced his cabin, hands clasped behind his back, this lean, versatile captain, who was later to go down with the Charybdis in the Channel, looked serious and worried. This is the gist of what he told me.

British submarines in the Mediterranean had, in some months, destroyed fifty per cent of the men, munitions and armour sent from Italy to the enemy forces in North Africa. The lion's share of this destruction was the work of the 10th Flotilla based at Malta; a group of boats that boasted, among others, such commanders as Wanklyn, Tompkinson and Cayley. Their leader was that superb submarine strategist Captain (now Rear-Admiral) G. W. G. Simpson—"Shrimp" Simpson.

No army could stand the losses that Rommel had suffered at the hands of the 10th Flotilla. Consequently, the submarine base at Malta had received the unremitting attention of the Italian and German air forces, and the point came when bombing caused so many casualties that the remnants of the flotilla had to flee to Alexandria. With our submarines out of the way, Rommel was building up the strength to launch what was to be his last great offensive.

The two submarines entering the Med immediately before Unbroken's arrival at Gib had both been sunk. Wanklyn and Tompkinson had been lost, and the sea-bed was littered with our wrecks. Una, commanded by Pat Norman, Joe Harrison's P.34, and Unbra, commanded by Lynch Maydon, were the only submarines of the old 10th Flotilla left, and they were at the far end. When Unbroken arrived at Malta she would be the only submarine afloat in the heartbreaking scrapyard of bomb- and mine-shattered hulks.

My immediate reaction to the news was to say: "Well, let's sail for Malta right away and get cracking," but Captain Voelcker shook his head.

"No," he said, "you can't even get into the Grand Harbour at Valletta. Apart from his tremendous bombing effort on the island itself, the enemy has carried out a complete blockade by mining. The 'searched channels swept by minesweepers at regular intervals' are absolutely blocked with every variety of mine that German and Italian ingenuity can devise. We don't even know how to sweep some of the more complicated ones. Even if we did, all our sweepers have been sunk! By an all-out effort of his Mediterranean air forces the enemy has managed to deny us the effective use of Malta. But as soon as he lets up, or as soon as we can get a few fighters in and operate them, your chance will come."

Presents For Home

March at Gibraltar is a dreary month, but we enjoyed it after the chill of a northern winter. A great attraction were the shops, piled high with all the ingredients of feminine allure—cosmetics, silk stockings, chocolates, dress lengths, scents and dainty underwear. We bought as much of it as we could afford, and sent it to Britain with pals on homeward-bound ships. I had pleasing visions of a silk-gowned Ting, the envy of utility-frocked Aldeburgh.

I could only assume she was now at Aldeburgh. To our annoyance and disgust there was no mail awaiting us aboard the Maidstone. Something had gone wrong somewhere—one of those irritating mix-ups which every serviceman experiences at some time or another, and which, although small in themselves, are vastly upsetting to the individual.

There was an eleven o'clock curfew at Gib, but when the crew of the Unbroken decided to throw a party at a local wine shop, they were certain that the provost marshal had not intended that they should be included in the regulation. Consequently, they were to be seen returning to the dockyard in the early hours of the morning along a zig-zag course any U-boat-conscious skipper would have envied.

The sudden personal appearance of the provost marshal had a steadying and sobering effect, however. The songs

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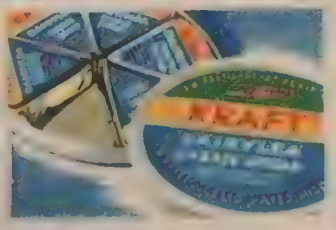

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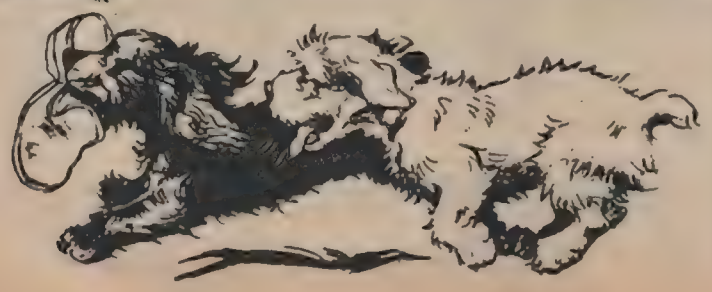

died on their lips and they dispersed as fast as their hind legs would carry them. A few climbed a tree and waited for the provost marshal to pass. As he walked beneath the branches there was a breathless moment until one rating, discovering that wine-drinking and tree-climbing did not mix, was violently ill.

Furious—and rightly so—the provost marshal blew his whistle, and what seemed like an entire regiment of soldiers appeared from the neighbouring rocket sites. A merry game of hide-and-seek ensued before the sailors made their escape. We were then living in the spacious and comfortable quarters of the Maidstone, and with great ingenuity the celebrators managed to sneak aboard without falling foul of the officer of the watch. As none of them was caught, I did not hear of the matter officially.

Cure For The Blues

The wardroom of the Maidstone was almost empty, and I sipped a lonely drink at the bar. I was depressed; I reckoned I might just as well be at home with Ting as wasting the weeks in Gib waiting for something to happen. My thoughts were interrupted by the appearance of a messenger. "Excuse me, sir, but the captain would like to see you in his cabin."

Captain Voelcker was alone in his day cabin. He invited me to sit down. "Well, Mars, you know you're the only submarine around these parts, don't you?" The question was purely rhetorical and I did not feel it needed an answer. He smiled. "Know anything about folboats?"

"No, sir, except that they're canvas folding boats, like canoes."

Voelcker nodded. "There's a special operation for you in a week's time." My heart raced. "Utmost secrecy is essential. I am telling you, and you alone, that it will involve landing people on the coast of France. You'll be away about a month and you'll land a party of four. Your job is to get them there and see they paddle ashore safely in their folboats. They've probably never seen a submarine before and will be a damned nuisance. That's too bad. Their leader is a bloke called Churchill."

He saw my expression and laughed. "No, not that one! This is a Captain Peter Churchill. You'll meet him and his desperadoes later. In the meantime we've got some folboats and you can amuse yourself finding out how they work." He smiled. "That's all for the present."

The Unwilling Sailors

I hurried back to my cabin and summoned Taylor.

"Number One, we must be ready for a patrol five days from now. It'll be a long one. Allow for a month, then add another fortnight for emergencies. You can count on having five passengers with us for at least half the time. We'll be carrying two folboats. There will be extra equipment, too. You'll have to find room for it all forrard. This is no ordinary patrol. I don't know the details yet, but all measures must be taken to keep secret that it's spy stuff until the folboats come aboard. When the cat is out of the bag I'll have a word with the ship's company. In the meantime it's just between ourselves."

I sent for Thirsk and Haddow. "Like to go boating this afternoon?"

"Bit chilly for sailing, isn't it, sir?" said Haddow, doubtfully.

"Not really the weather at all," added Thirsk.

"Ah, but this is a different sort of sailing," I assured them. "Folboats. Jolly interesting."

Thirsk and Haddow looked at each other, unconvinced. The former screwed up his face. "Be a bit blowy, sir," he ventured.

"Nonsense. This afternoon we'll collect a folboat from the depot ship and try it out. I'm told it's quite fun." They still appeared unimpressed. "Consider it an order," I added.

That afternoon we took a three-seater folboat, in a dubious state of repair, round to Rosia Bay—a reminder of the balmier days of 1932 when, as a naval cadet, I had swum there with the angel fish and trod in terror of the sea egg. We were the only bathers.

Half a gale blew in from the Atlantic, which produced "I told you so" expressions from Thirsk and Haddow, but I egged them on with a story to the effect that I'd often shot the rapids in Canada and that this was kid's stuff in comparison. As we rigged the folboat on a small mole, I thought the frame rather fragile for the boat's size, but we launched it, climbed in and paddled around in the sheltered water until we had mastered the thing.

By this time Haig Haddow was shivering like a willowy babe in the wood, and I allowed him to retire. I thought a good way of testing the seaworthiness of the boat would be to go out to the rolling waters beyond the mole, and a reluctant Paul Thirsk came as my one-man crew.

We had travelled about a hundred yards beyond the protection of the mole when the contraption began to hog and sag as though its back was broken. When we finally turned towards shore I discovered that it did, indeed, suffer from this distressing effect, but I could not prevent it from rolling over and ditching us. Thirsk's blasphemy over the loss of a brand-new cigarette lighter, which had been lying at the bottom of the boat, was not softened by the certain knowledge that Haddow was laughing his head off on the safe dry mole.

The sea was rougher and the current stronger than we thought, and it took us half an hour to manoeuvre the folboat back to safety. Politely Haig Haddow helped to haul the wreck to the beach, and refrained from comment. Paul Thirsk, however, could not resist remarking: "Great stuff this boating, sir. How did you enjoy it?"

Portrait Of A Hero

Joe Cowell, the Maidstone's staff officer (Operations), introduced me to Peter Churchill. If I had expected him to be a blond, titanic viking in the best traditions of the heroes of twopenny bloods, I would have been disappointed. Of medium build, dark, and with deep, intelligent eyes, he would be distinguishable in a crowd only by his charm and a certain sense of authority. Here was strong character, I felt, unassuming and quiet, yet capable of decisive violence should the occasion arise.

In the cabin of Captain Voelcker the plot was unfolded. We were to land four agents on the south coast of Vichy France, two at Antibes, and two at a suitable spot to be chosen by me. Churchill was to land with them but would return aboard. When this mission was completed, and not before, we were to have a few days' free-lance operations in the Gulf of Genoa—a little tit-bit for being good boys.

I was somewhat concerned about Antibes Bay. I recalled school holidays there when plenty of fishing boats had been about. Perhaps all that had been changed by the war, but it was going to be a tricky problem getting in and out of the tiny bay nonetheless. There was little doubt that we would have to enter the bay, for my folboat experience had shown me that those canvas craft were suitable only for the shortest and calmest of journeys. But I held my peace, for these were problems that would have to be solved on the spot.

Scattered Red Herrings

The need for secrecy was obvious. Everyone knew that we carried out clandestine ops against the enemy coast, but it would be suicide to let the Germans know in advance where the next one was going to be. I decided to scatter a few red herrings.

I sent for Paul Thirsk. "Have we the charts of the north-west African coast from here down to Sierra Leone?"

"No, sir."

"Then arrange to draw them from the dockyard. Have them delivered direct to the boat. Then check and correct them in the control-room."

"Aye, aye, sir. . . . But is it all right for me to be seen doing it?"

"I want you to be seen—but be as furtive as you can. Get it?"

Thirsk smiled. "Aye, aye, sir."

As we were the only fully operational

"I thought it was about time I returned your mower"

submarine at Gib, preparing for the patrol was an easy task; the Maidstone was able to devote all her energies to us. The biggest single job was topping-up the main batteries. They come to about three thousand times the size of a large car battery and needed between fifty and a hundred gallons of distilled water. Torpedoes were prepared, diesel fuel and lubricating oil were taken aboard, also fresh water and food.

I could see that Number One was becoming anxious about our destination. "Can you tell me where it's to be, sir?"

"I'm sorry, Taylor, but I'd better keep it under my hat."

"Yes, sir. Two folboats are being embarked this afternoon. Would you like to see the ship's company in the dinner-hour before the folboats arrive?"

"A good idea. Make it eleven forty-five."

"Yes, sir. There's one thing, sir, that worries me a little."

"What's that, old boy?"

"There's a buzz going around that we're doing a patrol down the West African coast, Dakar way."

"Is there now? Thanks for letting me know. I'll have a word to say about buzzes when I see the ship's company."

A Security Warning

Just before lunch the crews crowded into the control-room and overflowed into the passage-ways beyond. I reminded them how their lives depended on secrecy. I told them about the folboats, and added: "But don't start making wild speculations. They mean nothing. Folboats are a part of a submarine's equipment in the Med. Just the same, I don't want any mention made outside the boat of any special equipment we take aboard. It is not to be spoken of even in the depot ship."

After tea on April 11 Peter Churchill and his party came aboard. As they were considered to be part of the boat's armament, Haddow attended to their needs. Churchill was allotted the fourth sleeping place in the wardroom. This was practicable, for, although we numbered three officers, apart from myself, one was always on watch at sea and came down to occupy the bunk of the chap who relieved him. Thus one billet was always unoccupied.

Churchill's four desperadoes were distributed among the petty officers' and seamen's messes, which meant even more overcrowding. Their baggage, including certain weapons of sabotage, was taken aboard, and Haddow examined the latter items with professional interest.

It was as well that he did so, for included among them were pencil-bombs filled with plastic explosives and designed to be attached to aircraft. Operated on a barometer principle, they would explode when the aircraft reached a certain altitude and the air pressure decreased. The desperadoes did not realize it, but such drops in pressure occur in submarines, too, and the pencil-bombs might well have exploded during the voyage and made a very nasty mess. They were sent ashore far more quickly than they were brought aboard.

Million Franc Belts

We were due to sail at five o'clock. I changed into my seagoing dress—old trousers, kapok jacket, towel-scarf, old cap and binoculars—and went to say *au revoir* to Captain Voelcker. As we chatted, Joe Cowell burst in. "I'm sorry, sir, but Mars will have to wait. The 'Pay' has gone ashore with the keys of the safe and we can't get the money. I've sent a car to bring him back."

This was the first I'd heard of any money. Shortly afterwards an apologetic supply officer arrived with four black silky body belts for the secret agents. Each contained a million francs. And so, with four million francs tucked beneath my arm, I crossed the plank to Unbroken and climbed to the bridge.

I handed the loot to Thirsk. "Lock this in the wardroom safe, will you?"

I looked forrard and aft. The plank had been withdrawn and we were secured to the Maidstone by single wires at bow and stern.

"Group up. . . . Let go." The wires splashed into the oily water of the harbour.

"Main motors ready grouped up, sir," said a voice from below.

"Half astern together."

We slid away from the Maidstone. A wave from Captain Voelcker, "*Bon voyage*" from Joe Cowell. Through Algeciras Bay into the centre of the Strait. Curious watchers on the Spanish shore saw us sail south-west in the gathering dusk. Out of sight of their prying eyes we swung around to east-north-east.

We entered the Mediterranean.

NEXT WEEK: Night of alarms in Antibes Bay. "Unbroken," by Alastair Mars, D.S.O., D.S.C. and Bar, will be published in book form on June 8, by Frederick Muller Ltd., at 12s. 6d.

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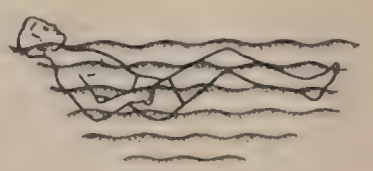

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JOURNEY INTO BRITAIN

Continued from page 17

way of the little men of the Vale. The whole economy is built around the work of the family: by that they must stand or fall. It fixes the size of their holding; it determines the amount of each crop they can grow, and its spread through the year, enough to keep all hands busy, not enough to overburden.

Such success is modest; yet its very modesty brings it within range, making it a spur to others. Last year, for instance, John Hall's last hired hand, young Peter Tomkins, who joined him as a fourteen-year-old boy from school, seized his opportunity, took on a piece of land that was going, and is now, at twenty-four, doing fine—a master-man, married, and living in one of the new white council houses with the pastel-coloured front doors.

Brussels Sprouts King

I do not know whether Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help* is still read in the Vale, but they certainly abide by his virtues, and the place abounds with just such stories of Achievement through Industry and Perseverence as would have warmed the good doctor's heart; stories like those of Les Staite, who came from one of the poorer streets of Evesham, now owns a flourishing nursery, and has just opened a new flower shop in Bridge Street; or the 1952 mayor, John Hodges, who started out as a clerk to an auctioneer in Evesham's central market and now has his own produce merchanting business and 120 acres of land; or that slightly fabulous character, Harry Stewart, the Brussels Sprouts King.

In the twenties, the Stewart brothers were struggling along on four or five acres like all the others. Those were difficult years. Even asparagus, the growers' friend, was wilting in the face of French competition. The Stewart brothers tried their hands at merchanting and were rubbing along fairly well—except that the stuff was so badly packed. Brussels sprouts, for instance, turned up in any old sort of container, and the weight might or might not be what it said.

So the Stewarts put in their own men to pick the sprouts. They were neatly packed, in twenty-pound nets, and in each net went a little blue label. "*Noted for Fair Packing and Full Weight,*" it said.

From merely picking the sprouts, the Stewarts moved on to growing them. They hired land on the slopes of the Cotswolds from the farmers who had very little use for it. Today they work 435 acres. Their sprouts carpet the hills. Their private bus collects their workers in the early morning, gets them up on the Cotswold slopes, ready to start work at first light. Pickers make £10 to £12 a week. The farmers get £15 an acre. "It's been the making of the hills," says Harry Stewart.

Scoffers Were Won Over

At first the men of the Vale were inclined to scoff at Harry Stewart's bus; to predict the early demise of his spreading sprout empire. For these folk distrust the spectacular. They are wary. Like the men from Missouri, their motto is "Show me!" But, shown, they are not unwilling to see and to follow. Today the Vale uses more agricultural machinery per acre than any other area of Britain: yet there is more hand-digging, too.

For the nation at large, the proof of this pudding is in the eating; and from the villages that ring Evesham the produce pours, day by day and week after week through most of the year, as from a conjurer's sleeve. From the single small village of Bretforton alone, in the winter, more than 4,000 nets—80,000 pounds—of sprouts roll to market each day, as the lorries trundle about the lanes, stopping every few hundred yards to pick up the piles of produce that stand waiting in the gateways, funnelling them into Evesham, down the hill to the Avon Bridge, grinding up the steep, busy street on the other side, and then out again by special trains, by fifteen-tonners, rumbling through the night to the markets of big cities at dawn, to wholesalers and shopkeepers, the barrow-boy and the pantry.

At eleven o'clock every weekday in Evesham's central market, the little knots of buyers tag along behind the chanting auctioneers, threading their way through the green mounds of produce. Some growers like the auctions; others prefer to market through the Badsey growers' co-operative; some sell to merchants locally and out-of-town; others through commission agents. In this, as in all things, these men are individualists; and if they grumble, as they often do, at poor prices, they endure them with the same sturdy fatalism as they face a premature cold snap or a ruinous hailstorm.

It is this determination to take the rough with the smooth that has kept the Evesham small grower going; but it has, nevertheless, its shortcomings.

There was, for instance, the bumper plum crop of 1952, the result of the kindness of the weather and the efficiency of new insecticides. That, one might think, would be an occasion for rejoicing. But there was little rejoicing in Evesham. With plum prices slumping to 1d. and 1½d. a pound, and transport costing ½d. a pound to London or Manchester, growers often made losses. So a large part of the crop was left to rot on the trees, falling to the ground in a mush, bringing the danger of plant disease.

Could it be that public taste was changing? In the offices and markets of Evesham, growers and merchants debated the disaster endlessly. But most took for granted the fact that was really significant: that the plums for which the growers were getting 1d. and 1½d. a pound were still being offered to the public at 9d. to 1s.

Blinkered by that obstinate individualism which in other circumstances is their strength, the Evesham men have still to work their way through to the constructive solution: the closer linking up of plot and pantry, the excision of the parasitic mass of unnecessary middlemen.

New Ideas From Holland

The change, when it comes, might come from outside. From the days of the monks of Evesham Abbey, the innovators here have often been strangers—the Genoese Ambassador in the seventeenth century, James Myatt, from Camberwell, who began to grow outdoor strawberries and rhubarb in the Vale last century. And now, at Offenham, where the thatched village street ends in a red-and-white maypole, you will sometimes meet a solid, broad-shouldered man with a comfortable Worcestershire accent in which there intrudes from time to time a faint Dutch "d." This is Arie Boers—known to Offenham as "Harry Bore."

Arie Boers comes from Utrecht, where he was one of a Dutch market gardening family of ten. Until he was twenty-four, he told me, all he got was 2s. a week pocket money. Arriving in England sixteen years ago, he was astonished to find the growers complaining. Yet, to his Dutch way of thinking, the prices they received seemed to indicate a horticultural Eldorado. "If I can just get an acre or two," he told himself, "I'm made. . . ."

And now he was telling me these things in a vast glasshouse, one of several which covered two acres. Water, electrically pumped from the river, was distributed from overhead tanks. Outside, Boers's twenty workers were planting hundreds of cauliflowers seedlings into three-inch pots, to go out into the fields in March, providing Britain's early cauliflowers.

Here was something very different from the plodding routine of the small growers. In fact, "Harry Bore" brings to the business of market gardening something of the measured calculation of the Stock Exchange. Now, his brother has come over, and there are three other Dutchmen there, too, their Dutch lights and greenhouses forming a veritable Crystal Palace. And; from this "Little Holland" on the Avon's bank, the glass spreads over Offenham, and over the Vale.

Here, at Offenham, where Clement Lichfield, the last Abbot, retired to die within sight and sound of his Bell Tower, the river makes a wide bend before turning back on itself again to take Evesham in its arms.

It is a gentle, pastoral stream, Shakespeare's Avon, as it winds its way

LIFE WITH FATHER

FATHER was forever clowning and teasing, and life with him was like an extended comedy act. We lived in Birmingham when I was small and, since he was on tour most of the time, we saw him only on Sundays. He made a point of being home for Sunday breakfast, precisely at eight o'clock, and he would walk in just as the grandmother clock in the hall was chiming the hour.

"What time did I say I'd be home?" he'd ask, even before he greeted us.

"Eight!" Dianne, my sister, and I would chorus.

"And what time is it?"

"Eight!"

We used to spot him from an upstairs window. He usually parked his car up the lane, waiting for the right moment to arrive home triumphantly on the dot. He never missed. Once we thought he was late. His car was nowhere in sight as the clock started chiming.

"At last we've got him where we want him!" Mother said, just as the kitchen door burst open, and there Daddy was, exactly on time. He had crept up under the hedge, and sneaked in through the back.

He was a warmly affectionate and demonstrative man, always asking for hugs, happiest on those Sundays when we were all together. He could not bear his own company. He liked to be sitting close, holding hands.

As a parent he was mild and indulgent. He kept out of storms in the domestic teacup; only once can I recall his actively interfering. It was in London, after Dianne had started music lessons and become bored with them. For weeks Daddy listened to daily arguments when Mummy tried to get her to practise. Suddenly one morning he drove us to school, and took Dianne to the head mistress.

"I'm cutting my losses," he said with finality. "Dianne is to have no more piano lessons."

Instinctively he was sympathetic. I shall always be grateful for the way he received the news that I had run away from boarding school. "The child needs a holiday," he said. And the three of us went touring for a week. He knew that I would have lost face with the other girls had I been sent back to school right away. But after a week I returned a heroine.

It was not the first time I had embarrassed him. As a toddler, I was taken occasionally to the theatre to watch the show from the wings. One day he was standing on the opposite side of the stage, waiting to go on, when he caught my eye and waved. Without hesitating I walked across, right in the middle of a turn by a team of tap dancers.

Oddly for a man carefree about most things—including financial matters—he was a chronic worrier about his work. He never sat back on his laurels. Before a new show he would break out in a nervous rash, and spend sleepless nights going over his lines.

"But is the audience going to like me?" he would ask in his torments of anxiety, and we would have to reassure him.

It was so bad before his London opening that we were afraid he would dry on his lines and fail even before he started. Somehow he made it, and returned home the following week-end to a fantastic welcome.

Fond though he was of us, Dianne and I had only a second place in Daddy's heart. He had always wanted a son and, after seventeen years, John arrived.

Nothing was ever too much for John. Within a week of his birth, my father declared that he had provided for his education up to the age of twenty-five by taking out a special insurance policy. He bathed the baby, dressed him, fed him and changed his nappies.

John had his hair cut at nine months. Even as a tiny baby we were never allowed to dress him in frocks.

"He's a man," Daddy always insisted. "Never let there be any doubt about that."

Wherever Daddy went, John went, too—in a canvas cot, visiting, dining out and, on occasions, to the theatre. And when Daddy was so ill in hospital that he was not allowed even to lift his hands, rules had to be broken to admit John.

But my father was incurably ill. The doctors knew it was only a matter of months, and out of kindness they let him go back to work. He died suddenly, but happy, I feel, in the thought that John's education had been taken care of. Yet, typically, Daddy had forgotten one important detail. He had never got round to signing the insurance policy.

Who is the famous father? For his name—and the complete photograph—turn to page 35

among the orchards and the glasshouses and growing vegetables from Stratford to Pershore and Tewkesbury, where the Avon joins the Severn, and flows on to the sea.

In 1635, the records show, William Sandys, by an order-in-council of Charles I, was granted the right to make the Avon navigable from Tewkesbury to Coventry. Old Evesham people can recall the days when barges of coal and corn were still arriving in the town by river. But the Avon went into decay. Debris choked its course. The locks William Sandys built became derelict. It was not possible to travel farther down the river by boat than Chadbury Lock, three and a half miles from Evesham.

Then, in 1947, a Lancashire business man named Ede England, retiring to Evesham, took over Collins boathouse which confronts Sammy Groves's boathouse across the Avon Bridge. "I swore," says Ede England, "that I'd get the river open—or die in the attempt."

"Save the Avon" appeals went up on Evesham walls. Ede England persuaded Birmingham business men to form a Lower Avon Navigation Trust. They estimated that to open the river from the Severn to Evesham would cost £20,000. Already £11,000 of that has been raised.

Even the War Office lent a hand. At Chadbury, the river bank resounded with the clanking of cranes and excavators. I found a party of thirty R.E.s under Sergeant-Major Loach—who helped to get the Dutch canals back into working order after the war—putting up the shuttering for the walls of the new Chadbury lock.

Into The Eel Business

Across the river rises the mellow Tudor walls of Chadbury Mill. Another retired business man, a Scot this time, lives there. His name is Bruce Purves, and it was he who had rowed me across to where the new lock was building. During the war he had taken out the mill wheel and sold it to the Government for scrap. Now the old mill-wheel chamber is an eel-trap and, on dark, moonless nights, Purves opens the sluices, and the Avon's eels, on their way down to the ocean, find themselves instead wriggling in boxes on their way to Billingsgate.

Eels had been caught on the Avon, there, said Purves, for a thousand years. In the early days the rent to the abbey was paid in these eels.

The abbey is gone, and the monks with it, long ago; but the long lines of cauliflowers and spring cabbages and Brussels sprouts still flourish in the very shadow of the Bell Tower, and this land, the land the monks worked, still remains among the best black soil in Evesham.

And each night, by lorry and trailer and by special trains, the produce of the Vale pours out from this heart of England to supply not merely refectory tables, but half the great cities of the land. THE END

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HERE COMES THE CRAWLING WONDER!

Continued from page 14

the side," he told him one morning. "You've got to account for every penny."

"It can be done, you know," said Delaney, getting confidential. "Oh, yes, it can be done."

"I wish you'd show me how," said Alfy.

Delaney winked, dug Alfy in the ribs and lit a cigar. "Only mugs work," he said.

Then another customer came in and he dried up.

BUT the next day he was back. "I've been thinking," he said. "Do you remember, some years before the war, there was a woman in New York who pushed a peanut all the way up Broadway with her nose. She did it for a bet."

"I never could understand women," said Alfy.

"No, but listen, boy," said Delaney. "It's given me an idea. What about crawling all the way from Land's End to John o' Groats on your hands and knees?"

"Who?" said Alfy.

"You," said Delaney.

Alfy looked at him hard. "Where've you been this morning before you called here?" he asked.

"I'm serious," said Delaney. "I've been thinking it all out."

He looked serious, too. Alfy got up and drew himself a pint, and then went back and stared at Delaney.

"What the hell are you talking about?" he said.

"You haven't got used to the idea" said Delaney. "It isn't as crackers as it sounds. Look. You have an advance man goes on in front, sticking up bills in the places you'll pass through. The bills say something about 'The Mystery Man will pass through Little Gubbinsville tomorrow. He is crawling from Land's End to John o' Groats for a bet. En route he depends entirely on your assistance. Give generously to this great sportsman.' Then somebody goes round with the hat while you're doing it."

Alfy didn't know whether to laugh or lock himself in somewhere.

"Who'd stick the bills up?" he said.

"I'd do that," said Delaney.

"And who'd go round with the hat?"

"I'd do that as well. Oh, it can be managed all right. I'd keep nipping back. I've got a little 1934 Austin. Well, what do you think? No headquarters, no address, no books, no income tax. All the pickings are ours."

"And think," said Alfy, "of the fortunes we'd pick up round Land's End and up at John o' Groats and similar thickly populated districts. That's where the money is."

Delaney shook his head slowly and pityingly. "You haven't got it, boy," he said. "You don't have to crawl from Land's End to John o' Groats."

"I'm glad about that, anyway," Alfy said.

"That's only what it says on the bills," said Delaney. "Once you're through a place, they won't care if you go on crawling to the North Pole. It'll all be forgotten. So you only need crawl where there's money about. As soon as the places begin to thin out, we'd turn off and try somewhere else. Why, we might be weeks working Birmingham."

"Crawling about?" said Alfy.

Delaney clicked his tongue. "I've never known a man to be so long getting an idea. Listen, boy. You'd hardly have to crawl at all. I'd take you along to some village in the car, then you'd get out and begin to crawl. And as soon as you were through the village I'd pick you up in the car and whip you along to the next one. It's money for breathing."

Alfy finished his pint and put down the glass with a thump.

"Think it over," said Delaney. "There's plenty of time."

And so there was, because Delaney didn't show up for the next day or two. Alfy became absent-minded and seemed to be doing mental arithmetic in his spare moments. His wife sometimes had to ask him a question three times before she got an answer, and then it was likely to be the answer to some other question. And, waking up suddenly at four o'clock in the morning, she found him awake, too, and sitting up in bed.

"What's the matter, Alfy?" she said, sitting up at his side.

"Can't sleep," said Alfy. "Can't stop thinking." He got out and pattered to the window and stared at the sneering dawn. "Time business was bucking up."

"It isn't your fault if times are bad, Alfy," said his wife. "And I don't see why you have to worry. We jog along very nicely."

"Jog along!" He went back to the bed and sat on the edge. "I sweat all the hours that God sends and where are we after it? You were right, my love—only mugs work."

"Now, Alfy!"

"W-e-ll——! Look at these smart alecs we get in the saloon at weekends. You're not going to tell me they sweat for it, are you? But they can throw it about right and left. You've got to know a fiddle these days."

"Alfy, now, I don't like you talking like this," said his wife. "I don't want you to be a smart alec. It makes me sick to look at them. They'll land up where they don't want, one of these fine mornings. At least we're happy. It's a simple sort of life, but we're happy. Aren't we?" she added, when he said nothing.

"Oh, yes," he nodded.

"Well, then. How long haven't you been sleeping?"

"A few nights," said Alfy.

"What you want is a day or two off, before the summer rush starts. You haven't had a break for about four years. Why don't you have a few days at the seaside? I can look after things here all right."

"It's an idea," said Alfy.

THE next night, after the last customer had gone, he told her that he still didn't feel like sleep. He thought he'd have a little walk before he turned in.

"Best thing you can do," she said.

Moving quietly, so that she shouldn't hear suspicious noises, he changed into his gardening suit and went out. It was a moonless night, but there was just enough light to see by. He listened, but there wasn't a sound. He rounded the corner of the fence, in case she was looking out of the window, then he dropped down on all fours in the middle of the lane. He began to crawl.

He had crawled as far as Bun Field Farm when a light suddenly appeared round the bend. P.C. Moon got off his bicycle.

"Hallo, Alfy," he said.

"Hallo," said Alfy, looking up.

"Looking for something?"

"My fountain pen," said Alfy in a

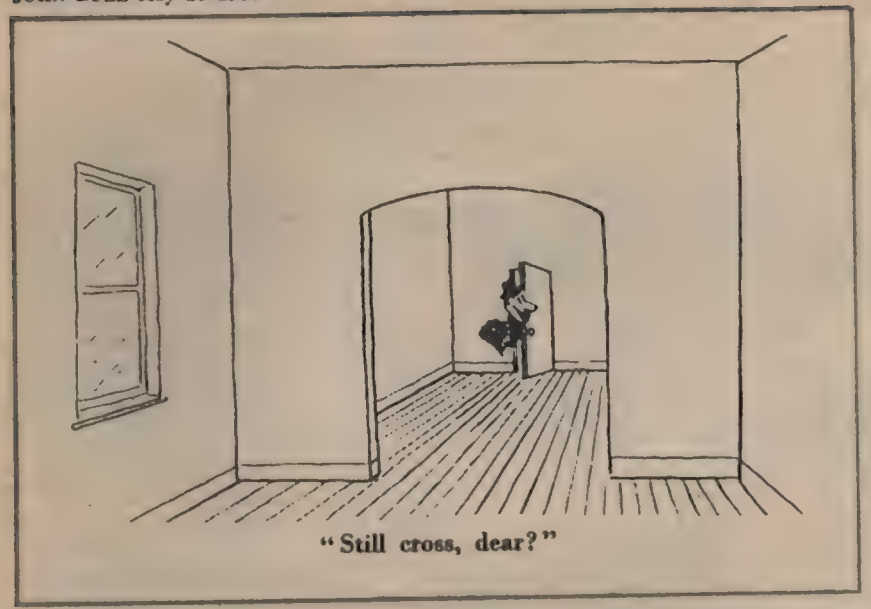
THE HUMAN MACHINE

Keep calm

ARE you subject to periodical fits of insanity? If you frequently lose your temper, the answer is: yes. After all, what is the difference between an infuriated person and a homicidal maniac, except one of degree?

This may be shocking, but it is not exaggeration. You are either in your senses or you are not. And once you lose your temper and let emotion dominate reason, you are out of your senses.

by ROFFE THOMPSON



"Still cross, dear?"

panic, and he managed to get it out and drop it in the ditch.

P.C. Moon twiddled his front lamp about, but there was no sign of the fountain pen. Alfy got stiffly to his feet and the two men walked side by side down the lane.

"You all right, Alfy?" the policeman asked.

"Why not?"

"I only wondered."

Alfy went into the pub and slammed the door. He put a light on in the tap and sat looking at his trousers. Where once the knees had been. He kept on swearing in whispers.

DELANEY came back three days later. Alfy took him down the lane, where they could sit on a bank and talk without his wife hearing.

"That idea of yours," he said. "What if I was recognized somewhere?"

"Black mask," Delaney answered like a flash. "The Masked Man. Make it more mysterious."

"There's another thing," said Alfy. "I tried it out the other night. My trousers will never be any good for gardening again. I shall need a fresh pair every mile."

"Leather patches on your knees," said Delaney. "Like some chaps have 'em on their elbows. And metal toecaps.. And heavy gloves. I'll fix all that."

Alfy plucked two grass stalks and began to plait them together.

"Wife says I ought to have a day or two off. What about a trial turn for this stunt? Then if we found it didn't work we could pack it up and nobody would ever know anything about it."

"Just what I had in mind," said Delaney. "I know what we'll do. I aimed to start at a place down in Wiltshire called Cross Gate. If you could meet me up in London on Wednesday I'd run you down there in the car. I'd have your new pants and everything and I'd fix the bills on Tuesday. On?"

"All right," said Alfy. "I'm on."

So, on Wednesday morning, about half past ten, they pulled up half a mile outside Cross Gate in Wiltshire and Delaney told Alfy he looked fine. Alfy certainly looked different, with great leather patches on his knees and a narrow black mask across his eyes. Delaney lifted a big hand-bell out of the little car.

"What's that for?" Alfy asked.

"You'll see," said Delaney. "Come on. Down on your hands and knees before anybody comes into sight. You're supposed to have been crawling for miles. Right? Then here we go!"

With Delaney two yards in front, Alfy began to crawl towards Cross Gate. Delaney swung the hand-bell hard enough to wake up the whole country.

"Do you have to make that damn' row?" Alfy shouted.

"It makes 'em look," said Delaney.

It certainly did that. People came running out of shops and houses. Stall-erecting men, getting ready for a little market in the square, suddenly left their jobs. Curtains were pulled aside. But the people only looked eager, they didn't look surprised. Little bills stuck on walls told Alfy why. Cross Gate had been waiting for the Mystery Man on his crawl to John o' Groats.

Delaney stopped Alfy outside the Clover Leaf and made a speech. He pointed out how exhausted Alfy was after some hundreds of miles of this kind of thing. He said that only a man of very great spirit, a super sportsman, would have taken on a bet of this nature. He said that until the bet was won the Mystery Man had no other source of income than the generosity of the sporting public. He added that they were, for the moment, in the hands of the good people of Cross Gate.

Delaney could tell a very good tale. He must have been very useful to that circus, Alfy thought, wondering why he had left it. Money began to fall into Delaney's hat from all quarters. When the tinkle eased off he invaded the shops. Then he invaded the Clover Leaf itself and brought a frothing pint out to the Mystery Man. Alfy, still on all fours in the road, felt like a horse being watered, as Delaney crouched to feed him the pint.

"Money for picking it up!" Delaney whispered. "I reckon I've collected thee or four quid already."

Three or four quid! Alfy reckoned it up at half a dozen places a day, six days a week. It made the old pub look silly. This was the life!

WHEN it was plain that Cross Gate had parted with the last penny it intended to invest in crawling mystery men, the little procession moved off. For about half a mile it was followed by a swarm of chanting children, but at last the interest wore thin and Delaney and Alfy were alone.

"I'd better nip back and get the car," said Delaney. "I know a back way where they won't see me. In future we'd better have it planted ahead before we start. Keep on until we're round the corner. There are three haystacks. You can wait for me there."

But before they had turned the corner, Alfy saw, to his horror, the figure of a little man in a big bowler hat coming towards them. The little man stopped dead at the sudden vision.

"Leave him to me," Delaney whispered. "You keep on."

"Something wrong, mate?" the little man asked when they came abreast.

"Big sporting event," Delaney said grandly.

The little man turned and dropped into step by his side.

"How?" he said.

Delaney began to explain.

"What's the mask for?" said the little man.

"Mystery Man," Delaney said irritably.

It was question after question. Alfy began to sweat.

They rounded the corner and passed

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the three haystacks. The Mystery Man's bones felt as if they were going to snap. He began to sweat more than ever. Then he heard Delaney mutter "Hell!" He looked up. Down a long stretch of road, coming towards them, were a bouncing man and woman in hiking costume.

"How long do you reckon it'll take him to get to John o' Groats?" said the little man.

Alfy's nerves seemed to catch fire.

"A year?" said the little man, settling down for a morning's fun.

Hours seemed to be passing. Alfy crawled on. Delaney and the little man marched side by side. The distant hikers stopped to stare and wonder. The Mystery Man could see himself crawling right out of Wiltshire, accompanied by the little man and the hikers and dozens of other people picked up on the way. And perhaps even a dog or two.

"Two years?" said the little man.

BEFORE Delaney could stop him Alfy was on his feet in front of the little man. He'd had enough.

"Will — you — stop — asking — your — everlasting — damn' — silly — questions!" he shouted.

He grabbed the bowler hat's brim with both hands. He pressed. The hat passed with a sickly click over the little man's ears and finished up round his chin. "Get the car!" said Alfy, and turned and jumped over a hedge.

The little man began to shout. He turned and ran into a tree. The distant hikers began to hurry. Delaney began to run. Alfy, doubled up, kept behind the hedge until he reached the haystacks. Then he dived.

Alfy's wife was sitting in the porch reading the morning paper when he got back.

"You haven't been long," she said.

"Not seaside weather," said Alfy. "Managed all right while I've been away?"

"'Course I have," said his wife. "Has that chap Delaney been in?"

"No. Why?"

"I only wondered," said Alfy. "What's the matter with your knees?" she said. "You're walking very stiffly."

"Touch of the screws," he told her.

He didn't seem particularly chatty, she thought, for a man just back from the seaside. She folded the paper at a paragraph and changed the subject.

"It's a funny world," she said. "Masked man been attacking people down in Wiltshire, they say."

Alfy went cold. So it had got into the news! He wondered where it was going to end. But perhaps they'd never trace him.

"A lot of that about," he said wearily.

"But this one's different," said his wife. "He said he was walking on his hands and knees from Land's End to John o' Groats. I don't know why they let 'em out, do you?"

There was a swish on the gravel. P.C. Moon got off his bicycle and Alfy's stomach turned over.

"So you've got back, Alfy?" said P.C. Moon.

This is it! Alfy thought. Assault and battery! Money under false pretences! Conspiracy! And Delaney vanished with all the kitty, leaving him to carry the can. . . . The miles of explaining there'd be to do. He could hear people laughing until the next generation. . . .

"I found your fountain pen, Alfy," said P.C. Moon. "It was in the ditch."

Alfy's stomach turned back, and P.C. Moon seemed to spin round like a Catherine-wheel pinned on a pole.

"Oh, thanks," said Alfy. "Come in and have a pint when you're off duty."

After P.C. Moon had cycled away, Alfy's wife said: "You don't look as if you'd been at the seaside."

"Change of air doesn't always show at once," said Alfy. "I'll be all right."

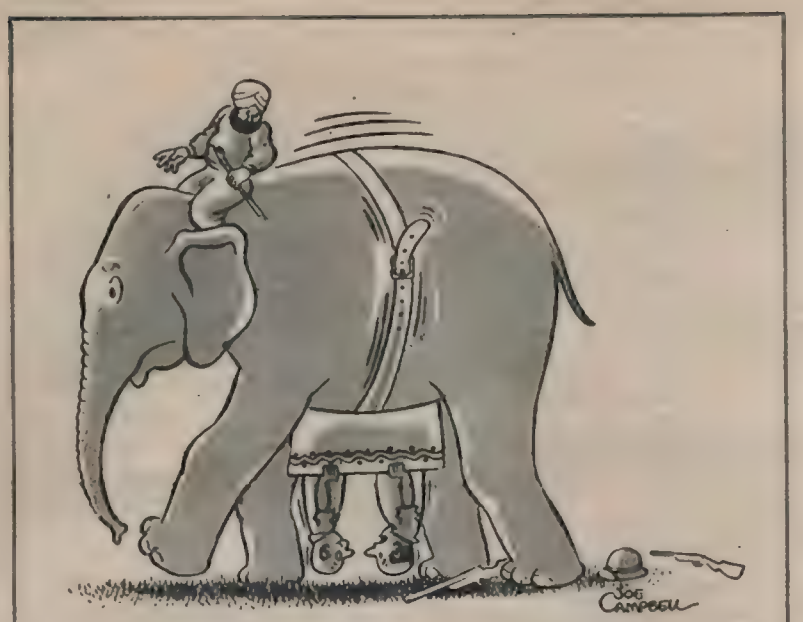
He closed his eyes.

"Nice to be back?" she asked.

"Lovely!" said Alfy.

"What have you been doing while you were away?"

Alfy didn't answer. He was fast asleep. He needed that break, she thought. THE END



"No. . . . I thought you tightened it!"

THE MARAS AFFAIR

Continued from page 20

committed suicide. Why not leave it at that?"

"No, no, my dear Burton. I say nothing of the sort. Like you, I am quite convinced that Sokolny was murdered."

Burton spent a restless night. Sesnik's bassoon tones broke in on his snatches of sleep and kept him tossing in wakefulness. He had left Sesnik still in the office and given him a key; Sesnik had insisted on having the place cleaned up for him. When Burton rose an hour earlier than usual, a thought flashed into his mind; Sesnik was going to install microphones in the office. By the time he had finished a light breakfast, the thought had developed. The police could have gained admission at any time through the janitor, and there might have been microphones in the office since his first visit to Sesnik, or even before.

The thermometer had risen in the night; the snow had turned to slush and the gutters were flooded. Burton asked the doorman to get him a cab. His intention had been to call for Anna and warn her of Sesnik's conviction and of his own suspicion; but by the time a cab was available he had come to believe that it would be too dangerous to approach her at her lodging, so he drove to the office instead.

Except for a few patches of damp there was nothing to suggest that anything unusual had happened in the night. The borrowed key lay on the scrubbed desk with a scrawled note:

"My compliments. I trust that this will be the end of your troubles. Paul Sesnik."

Burton searched the two rooms thoroughly but could find no trace of a microphone or new wiring. Reason told him that his fears had been foolish, but he was no longer convinced by reason. If there were microphones they would be well hidden. He hoped now that Anna would not come to the office. He wondered for a moment if she might not have fled. She could reach the frontier in easy stages. She would find some way of getting across.

It seemed simple enough in fantasy, and he was on the point of meeting her in Vienna when she walked in.

She began automatically to open the morning mail: a few letters, some official papers, the full programme of the festivities arranged for the presidential visit and the anniversary of the new democracy. The programme was accompanied by a scrawl from a friendly clerk in the Propaganda Ministry: *"See me about the tickets—Gregor."*

It was a suggestion.

"Before you start work," Burton said, "we'll collect our seats for the big parade and the other doings next week."

"I'll get them, if you wish," she answered.

"No. We'll go together. Leave your rubbers on."

SHE looked so puzzled that he hurried her from the office. In the street and the driving snow, Burton said: "This is the only place where we can talk. The office may have been wired for microphones. I'm not crazy; just cautious. I don't mind being watched, but I draw the line at being overheard."

"For your own sake, I think you should stop being helpful." She was gloomy, performing a distasteful task. "What's going on is no concern of yours."

"It is if you're mixed up in it."

"Why? You're a stranger here; you do not know what you are doing. Your best plan is to complain about my work and tell me to leave. You will get a new girl from the university; one who will not involve you in anything."

"I don't want a new girl. Your work is more than satisfactory."

"This is no time to joke."

"I'm not joking," he protested. "I'm in this and I'm going to stay in till you get out of the country."

Anna said: "I cannot get out—I must stay here. I must stop this fanaticism before there is any more useless bloodshed. I am afraid, terribly afraid. You know well enough that Sokolny did not kill himself. When Jaffke talked of suicide, I did my best to support the false idea, but I knew before I left that Sesnik was not deceived."

"That's what I wanted to warn you about."

"I do not need any warning. Sesnik has no charge to make against me, and he cannot take action without at least some proof. He knows that President Riecke still has an affection for my father, and he is afraid of Riecke. But this does not mean that I have to be less cautious. My protection may be very limited. There is none at all for my friends."

"Why won't you leave the country? Your father wishes it."

"It is not so easy. I have no desire to hang myself on the barbed wire or be killed by a mine."

"There are other ways."

"They are becoming more difficult and more expensive. For those without means, there is only the frontier."

"There's this plan Sokolny dug up."

"I know nothing of that."

He felt she was speaking the truth, but he wanted to be sure. He watched her as he went on. "Isn't your friend Trovic interested?"

"Whatever Trovic is, he is not one of those who exploit terror to make money. He has not the money to buy aeroplanes or bribe guards. Sesnik may think he belongs to that gang, but it is not true. He has spent everything he had to help a few important people to escape."

"If I arrange for your escape, will you go?"

"No."

"Sokolny gave me the address of an agent."

"You are a very good and kind friend to me, but I cannot accept." She hesitated. "Nothing will ever make me leave my father," she said. "Nor will I desert my friends. If I have grown away from some of them, it is not their fault. I am not running away, and it is best that you know no more than you do at this moment."

He was angry suddenly. "What kind of a fool are you? Are you going to stick your neck out just because of this romantic idiocy?"

"Here is the Propaganda Ministry," she said. "It will be absurd if we both go in to get the tickets. I will go on round the corner to Radio House. My father wishes me to send him the programme for next week."

He watched her go on along the street, stepping confidently as if there were no slush. She was sure of herself, but that didn't mean that she knew what was round the corner.

HE greeted his friend in the Press Department sourly. "Why didn't you send the tickets with the rest of the junk?" he demanded. "Do you think I've nothing better to do than chase round here every five minutes?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Burton," Gregor answered him. "We always like to offer a choice of places to the foreign press on these occasions."

There was no way out. He had to go through the formality of approving his seats. Gregor had taken special care to reserve him a good place in the reviewing stand for the big parade. He would be quite close to President Riecke himself and within hand's reach of a dozen celebrities.

"Good," Burton said disagreeably. "Where can I buy a bomb?"

Gregor smiled nervously and looked over his shoulder. "I always like your English humour," he said, managing to convey a mild reproach by slightly stressing the first person singular. "Now, there are three seats for the great presidential address at the National Theatre on Wednesday, one on the platform for yourself, and two at the press table for Miss Maras and Mr. Sokolny."

"Mr. Sokolny will not be using his."

"I'm sorry. Is it his teeth?"

So they were hushing it up completely. A trip to the mortuary and no one would hear any more of the

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remains. Burton wondered if there were any next-of-kin.

"I want seats for the Opera Gala on Tuesday," he said. "I'll take the Agency coverage on most of the smaller things."

"But you will attend the Ranawitz ceremony on the Saturday?"

Ranawitz was the Guernica, the Lidice of local tradition. Some peasant had dared to fire a shot in defence of his home, and a village had been wiped out. The invader had ordered total destruction, but had carelessly left a few stones to stand as a monument of his ruthlessness. Each year, after the rejoicings in the capital, there was a pilgrimage to the common burial place of the martyrs. The relatives of the dead were honoured on this day of remembrance. There were solemn affirmations. There was much political psalm-singing.

"No," Burton said. "I shall not be going to Ranawitz."

"I'm sorry to hear that." Gregor raised a tone of mild protest. "Your predecessor, Mr. Glover, always made a point of going to Ranawitz. It is a very pleasant trip and we provide an excellent train for officials and the press."

"You'll be able to fill the train without me. Send the other tickets along when you will."

"Tomorrow," Gregor promised.

Burton walked back to the office in a bad temper. Anna sat at her desk, a picture of calm efficiency.

"Has anybody been——" he began coldly, and then stopped as he became aware of a flaxen-haired youth rising from a chair in Sokolny's corner.

"Who's this?" he demanded.

Anna answered the question. "His name is Wenzl. He has come to take Sokolny's place."

"Oh, has he!" Burton advanced grimly on the youth. "If you're not out of this office in ten seconds, Mr. Wenzl, you'll go out on the seat of your pants. You can go back to Sesnik and tell him that when I want a man, I pick him myself."

"I am from the university, sir," Wenzl protested timidly. "Mr. Sesnik was so kind to recommend——"

"You've got two seconds left."

Wenzl fled.

"You shouldn't have done that," Anna said. "The boy may have worked out all right. Sesnik will be offended."

Burton strode into his room and slammed the door.

THERE was no move from Sesnik. It could scarcely be sulks or indifference, so Burton decided that the policeman must be too concerned with polishing up his shoes for the week ahead to bother about anything else. In the office, work dropped back into a dull routine.

On Saturday the snow and the slush were gone, and in bright sunshine the town brought out bunting, hoisted flags and erected gigantic pictures of President Riecke and other heroes of the new order. From his office window, Burton could see as far as the Alexis Bridge. There were tall poles on the bridge with looped streamers of red bunting. Beyond was the great square where the workmen were busy on the saluting base and the stands for the privileged spectators.

Burton hauled on his overcoat and took up his hat.

"I'll be out for a while," he told Anna.

He went to his room in the hotel to recover Sokolny's watch, then walked to the shop of Emil Dovinye, four doors from the Alexis Bridge.

A tall man with a pointed grey beard came from behind a partition. It was quiet in the shop except for the ticking of clocks.

Burton remembered that the watchmaker spoke French.

He said: "Are you Monsieur Dovinye? I have a watch to be repaired. Examine it, please."

Dovinye turned the winder, opened the case, and fixed the lens of his craft in his eye.

"This watch has been here for repair. Where did you get it?"

"From a man named Sokolny. My name is Burton. Possibly you have heard of me. Is there a place where we may talk?"

"This is as good as any. Customers may be seen before they enter."

In the street, a man in a shabby coat was peering at the few articles in the window.

Burton removed his own wrist-watch. "I think you had better sell me a new strap. You have a card in the window."

Dovinye came from behind the counter and took up the card of straps from the window. The man in the shabby coat sauntered along the quay.

Burton said: "There has been some trouble. Sokolny is dead."

"Dead?" It was news to Dovinye. He was alarmed. Burton reassured him and supplied a few details. He said: "It is necessary for a friend of mine to take a trip abroad. I am willing to pay well if it can be arranged. I understand a tour is being organized."

Dovinye hesitated. "It is difficult. You are a stranger to me."

"But you have the watch."

"I will consult and let you know. There is a further difficulty because Sokolny is dead. If you will wait a moment. . . ."

The moment stretched into minutes. Dovinye was using a telephone, or he had slipped out the back way to see somebody. Burton looked through the window along the quay, but the man in the shabby coat was not in sight.

Dovinye came back. "I am required to make sure that you are Monsieur Burton of the British newspaper."

"That's easy enough." Burton produced his identity card with photograph and signature. "Do you want me to sign my name for you?"

"If you please."

Dovinye compared the signatures and nodded. "I suggest that you see Carlo Settembrini, the photographer."

Burton made a noise that was something like a whistle.

"You are surprised," Dovinye commented.

"A little. You'd better keep Sokolny's watch. How much do I owe you for the strap?"

"One hundred dollars American. It is the best pigskin." Something that might have been a smile crossed his face. "Killing pigs is a very risky business."

BURTON thought he knew Settembrini well enough to go straight to the point. "I've just come from Dovinye," he announced.

"Dovinye?" Settembrini repeated. "Do I know anyone of that name?"

"Yes. The watchmaker on the Breclin Quay. I'm acting for a friend."

"A case of claustrophobia?"

"If you want to call it that. I understand the treatment costs fifteen hundred American dollars. I'm ready to pay."

"The cost is slightly more at present. The equipment used is very expensive. Who is the patient?"

"The name is Anna Maras. Her father wants to get her out of the country."

"I can understand that. He must feel quite unsafe with such a hostage to consider. Does she consent to go?"

"Not yet. I'm hoping to persuade her."

"It may not be necessary if it is just a matter of getting her across the frontier. Once out, she would not be likely to come back, would she?"

Burton stared. "Are you suggesting that she could be abducted?"

"Taken unawares would be a better term. Since she is on your staff it might be worked, if things go according to plan."

"What is the plan?"

"I'm not going to answer any questions about that. I can tell you only that the organization is elaborate."

"How soon will it be put into effect?"

"On the day of the memorial ceremony at Ranawitz. We are taking advantage of the traffic to the village, which is very close to the frontier. If you can arrange for the girl to be on a certain train, we will be able to take care of her. Our difficulty is to get official travel permits. That will be easy for you."

"Which train is she to travel by?"

"It will not be decided until next week. Three trains leave in the morning of the big day. One of them will be selected for our party."

"How many will be in the party?"

SETTEMBRINI frowned. "There will be no more questions, please. The cost to you will be seventeen hundred dollars. You will see that a thousand is paid to my agent in Rome. You may hand the remaining seven hundred to me. You must let me know about it positively by Tuesday night. I shall see you at the Opera Gala. We'll have the train fixed by then."

"Is it going to be very dangerous?"

"Not if things go as planned. We are reducing risk to a minimum. It is always my aim to make everything foolproof. Up to date our casualty figures compare favourably with those of the normal transport facilities. We are proud of that."

"You ought to advertise."

Settembrini smiled. "The only thing that makes me uneasy," he said, "is the general atmosphere. I feel there is something working up. Do you sense anything?"

Burton hesitated, came to a decision and gave the news of Sokolny's end. This was Settembrini's cue to whistle.

Burton went on: "Sokolny was one of your agents, wasn't he?"

Settembrini shook his head absently. He was busy with his own thoughts.

"One thing is certain," Burton said. "Sokolny was murdered to stop his mouth. He had been seen in Sesnik's company at the Metropole."

"There are so many factions, and most of them are charged with fanaticism," Settembrini said slowly. "We, on the other hand, are hard realists. As a realist, I am worried, Burton. Sokolny was not killed because he was one of our agents. We are too well organized for that. This thing is deeper, and I think you know it. You are frightened for the girl. I am frightened, too—for our beautiful plan. We have invested a lot of money in it, and it could be wrecked so easily by these psychotics who think they are patriots. I tell you, Burton, there is something in the air. I have felt it for days. Earthquake weather."

Burton said: "Shall I take the address of your Rome agent?"

Settembrini shook his head. "I am

not the final voice. There may be objections to Miss Maras. I will speak to you at the Opera in the first intermission. Meanwhile, you should arrange for the girl to go to the ceremony at Ranawitz."

At the Ministry of Propaganda, Gregor said amiably: "It is just as well that I held the tickets to Ranawitz for you. I thought you would come to realize the national significance of the occasion."

"I have," Burton agreed. "I was entirely wrong."

Gregor made out the tickets and permits. "Unfortunately, I can no longer grant you de luxe seats on the special train," he said. "You will have to take your chance with other passengers on one of the earlier trains."

Burton told Anna as soon as he got back to the office. "We're going to cover the Ranawitz show after all," he said. "Both of us."

The president arrived at noon on Sunday to a ringing of bells and a sounding of whistles. Burton had his first sight of the great man when he attended the press conference at the official residence, formerly the Imperial Palace.

Riecke looked very old and very tired, and his lined, grey face suggested an unwrapped mummy rather than a living man. He was tall and very thin and stoop-shouldered, and his dull, dark eyes peered through thick-lensed spectacles. The semi-military tunic he wore was ill-fitting, as if his frame had shrunk since he had put it on. Halvic, the chief aide, a hustling, self-important man, stood on one side of him; on the other was Varlein, the dynamic secretary of the Party.

The proceedings were infinitely boring. Riecke delivered a brief speech composed entirely of platitudes. Then the selected questions were put to him and he repeated the same platitudes with little variation.

When he hesitated, Halvic prompted him. When he was finished with each question, he sat down and appeared to concentrate on the French and German echoing from the interpreters.

Not a line of copy was to be extracted from the thin-voiced patter. Burton gave up following the words and studied the man himself. At some time or other he must have had some inner force to drive him beyond the confines of a university. No sign of those days remained. Now he was just a puppet, a nonentity.

In the evening, the thin, aged voice went out over the air from Radio House and loudspeakers on street corners conveyed the empty message to those who had no sets of their own.

MONDAY was the day of the big parade. The president stepped out of his car, his white head bared to the sun. A great cheer rang out over the square, and massed bands played noisily. All the spectators in the stands rose up and the wooden structures swayed crazily. The president moved slowly down the line of the guard of honour, turned, came back and mounted the six steps of the red-carpeted platform where the city and service functionaries waited to greet him.

The show began at once and went on for hour after hour through the morning. Planes flew past, tanks and guns rumbled across the square, men marched, women marched, children marched. It was like every show of its kind, and Burton had tired of it before it began. All he was conscious of was Anna, impassive at his side.

There came a break in the parade. The eyes of President Riecke were turned in his direction, and then Burton realized that it was Anna who was the object of the president's attention. When, at some time past noon, the last section of the procession had marched across the square, the old man thrust aside the restraining hand of Halvic and pushed through his entourage towards the girl.

Burton saw that she was embarrassed. She knew that the great man was doing the wrong thing.

"It is Anna," he said in his thin voice.

"Yes," she answered, and she

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smiled at him, calling him "dear uncle." He took her hands and held them while he talked to her, and Burton made out that he was asking about her father and regretting that he had not seen him for so long.

Varlein tried to intervene. The programme. The car was waiting. The timetable was most important.

Anna saw that the situation was precarious. "You must go, dear uncle," she said. "All the people are waiting for you."

"Yes," he answered. "They are always waiting for me. When I am home again you must come to me and bring Anton. We will talk."

There was little to be written about the parade that had not been written a hundred times before. Burton did not return to the office until after lunch.

"Well," he said, "the Lord knows what news story I'm supposed to get out of all this jamboree. Maybe there'll be something at the Opera Gala tonight."

Anna smiled. "There will be culture, anyway."

"Fine," Burton said, delighted to see her smiling for a change. "I was always a great one for culture. You can explain the bits I don't understand."

He called for her in a cab that evening, and when they joined the excited throng in the brilliantly lit Opera House, he thought she had never looked more lovely.

"If your dear uncle sees you tonight," he said, "he'll invite you to the State box."

"Poor old man." She smiled. "I think he is very lonely these days."

The box was empty, yet eyes were constantly turning towards it, noting the details, the emblems, the flags, the greenery of pot plants. People looked at watches, and looked again a minute later. There was more excitement in the tuning-up noises of the orchestra. The conductor came to his stand amid applause, but the house lights were not lowered, and he waited, like all the rest. He stood there relaxed for a moment, then suddenly tightened up, rapped on his desk and lifted his baton. The orchestra was on its feet, the whole house rose, a discreet spotlight picked out the box, and the old man stepped forward, followed by Varlein, Halvic and the chiefs of the army and air force in uniform.

Everyone stood rigid while the orchestra played the "Internationale." It was impressive. The house was devout. Then, at the close, the cheers and hand-clapping swelled up and the

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM

old man bowed and bowed again. Against the background of uniforms he was a simple figure in a heavy tunic with a military collar. He wore only one decoration, the medal of honour given him by his own supreme council.

The house lights faded, a hush followed the noise, once more the conductor rapped on his desk. It was a mixed programme of ballet and opera. Quickly, almost before the audience could settle down, the performance of *Les Sylphides* began.

Babette danced. Up to the last minute Vera Kurtz had had treatments, but had been compelled to remain in her dressing-room. Once more Babette started shakily, but gained control of herself before the end. Anna complained when the lights came up. "She will not relax. She worries too much."

"Yes. You wait here." Burton looked at the crush in the aisles. "I have to see Settembrini about some pictures."

Settembrini was waiting in the bar. He said: "We are ready to take the girl. Have you decided?"

Burton nodded. "She has not yet consented, so you'll have to make the necessary arrangements."

Settembrini smiled and made a magician's pass with his hands. "All the arrangements have been completed. There is only one thing for you to do. Put her on the nine o'clock train from the Alexis Station."

"There'll be letters to give her when she's clear."

"Let me have them before Friday. And be careful, Burton, how you behave. If you arouse any suspicion the Police Judiciary will make it impossible for you to continue your work here. They are used to putting two and two together. They even have been known to do more complicated sums. There is a man standing at the end of the bar at this moment, the one with the glass of tea in his hand. Do you see him? He is quite a mathematician. He has been eyeing us ever since we pushed out of the crowd into this quiet corner. By the way, the watchmaker Dovinye was arrested this morning. Please keep your face straight."

"Sesnik?"

"I believe so."

"Because of my visit?"

"The whole world goes to a watchmaker. It is a question whether Sokolny was liquidated soon enough."

"Then you may be in danger?"

"I don't think so. Dovinye had other irons in the fire. There is nothing to show that he sent you to me. We are, after all, old acquaintances."

"But they have ways. He may talk."

"No, my friend, Dovinye will not talk. He always carried with him some cyanide. He had the good sense to swallow it." Settembrini laughed. "You had better rejoin the beautiful Anna. The first bell has gone. Starensky is in good voice just now and you mustn't miss him."

Anna was not in her seat. Burton looked round the crowded house uneasily. People were hurrying along the aisles and settling themselves. President Riecke and his party were conversing at the back of their box. Riecke moved forward to his chair and the others followed his example with the self-conscious ease of the great.

As Burton looked round once more he caught sight of Anna in one of the large boxes on the grand tier close to the president's. She was talking to a young man: then, a moment later, she was leaving him, and she regained her seat just as the lights were dimmed down.

"I saw a friend of mine," she said.

The orchestra had begun and a moment later the curtain rose on an apartment in the Kremlin. Burton looked up at the box from which Anna had come. The young man was leaning forward from one of the rear seats and his face was clearly visible in the light from the stage. Burton was sure he had never seen him before. He looked again, then turned to glance at Anna. Her eyes were fixed on the scene. She seemed serene, relaxed. He watched her, and saw her lean forward slightly. Boris had entered, and Starensky really was in good voice.

The whole house was tense as the scene developed. Boris meditated sadly the unrest in his kingdom. Shuisky came to tell of rebellion in Poland. Dmitri was on the march, the false Dmitri, for the true Tsarevitch had been slain; Shuisky himself could bear witness to the crime, and did so, leaving Boris in the grip of his torturing conscience. Now the score spun to the climax of the striking clock scene. Haunted by the vision of the murdered Dmitri, Boris shrank in terror. The great moment for the rapt spectators had come. Boris tottered and fell upon his knees, and at that instant a woman screamed wildly in the auditorium.

Hearing the scream, Burton instinctively caught Anna to him. They both looked up at the grand tier. Burton's eyes went to the box that Anna had visited. The first thing he saw was light from the corridor through the open door of the box. Two figures moved against the square of light. One was the young man Anna had spoken to. The other was Trovic.

He had pushed the screaming woman roughly aside. Now he leapt on to the balustrade and flung something violently into the State box. Halvic threw himself in front of Riecke in a hopeless effort to deflect the missile. There was a flash of light and a shattering detonation and dust blotted out the flag-hung box. Then, stuttering through the screams of terror, came the sound of a machine pistol.

Burton turned again to peer at the State box through the cloud of plaster dust.

President Riecke hung limply over the wreckage of the balustrade among the shredded flags. Where his face had been there was now no more than a pulp of blood.

Then the panic began.

To be continued next week

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LOVE AND MR. PICKERING

Continued from page 11

see why she had behaved so strangely towards him since yesterday. She was afraid that he had tumbled to her little game. Provocation, indeed! What kind of woman was she?

He went back downstairs and tried to reason things out in a civilized fashion. Was it his fault? Had he neglected her? *How far had this thing gone?* He would soon find out.

He thought that she had probably gone to the cinema and he decided to drive to town and meet her outside. Her? *Them.* Confront them. After all, she was his wife. She belonged to him.

Mr. Pickering went out of the gate and turned towards where his car was parked.

It was at this moment that Mrs. Pickering wandered sadly up the crescent from the other direction. She had been for a long, thoughtful walk, in the course of which she had again gone through a wide range of emotions. On the way home, she had arrived again at the forgiving stage. Then she saw Mr. Pickering come out of the house. Not content with staying out until ten o'clock, he sneaked back again when he found that the coast was clear!

Mr. Pickering got within sight of the car—and stopped. It was occupied. There was no need to go into town and confront them. He could do it here. He saw the glowing end of a cigarette. He heard a very faint giggle. This was more than he could stand.

It was also more than Mrs. Pickering could stand. She had whipped round the crescent and come across the waste ground from the other side. She watched the cigarette glowing, she heard the giggle. It was too much. She stalked across to the car, all fingernails and fire.

Mr. and Mrs. Pickering converged by the off-side front wing.

"Ada!" Mr. Pickering said..

"Norman!" said Mrs. Pickering.

Mr. Pickering went up to the back window and peered in. Two white, startled faces, close together, stared back at him. He looked at his wife again. A look of wonder and relief.

Mrs. Pickering put a restraining hand on her husband's arm as he went to open the door of the car. "Don't disturb them, Norman," she said softly. "They've done no harm."

Looking at his wife, even in that light, Mr. Pickering had that strange glow of emotion again, and he liked it. He put his arm around his wife's waist and drew her towards home.

"You're right," he said; then, searching for an apt motto: "We're only young once."

And Ada giggled, for right at that moment she was not at all sure about that.

THE END

LIFE WITH FATHER

Here is the missing person from the photograph on page 26—the late Sid Field, playing with his daughter Elaine seven years ago.

WHO'S NEXT FOR £500 AND RIVIERA HOLIDAY?

"WORDS cannot recapture the thrills of our luxury holiday in the Côte d'Azur sunshine!" declares one of the JOHN BULL readers in this picture. He is Mr. R. P. Taylor (34 Beckenham Avenue, East Boldon), whose £500 *Bullets* success last year brought him a Riviera holiday.

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FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues **XWORD 838**

1. Rabbit may not be at all easy to
5. Builder no doubt uses them
6. Rope is seldom needed for one
9. After gruelling fight, boxer's eye may be described as this in colour
13. It's drudgery to work all day in garden without any
14. There are people who make a study of this
15. Many a man is too easily satisfied with what he gets from his this

Down Clues

2. A man may occasionally try to keep this in garden shed
3. One expects this to glow
4. They are a handicap in many walks of life
7. Some garden bushes seem particularly this
8. Want of water may make one disastrous
10. Having one may well cost you more than you imagined
11. Don't be too eager to buy from shopkeeper whose prices are not this
12. It suffers if there is little sunshine

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XWORD 833 RESULT

WINNING WORDS, ACROSS: 1, Parts. 2, Dash. 6, Black. 7, Rice. 8, Tale. 13, Blow. 14, Mark. DOWN: 1, Peer. 3, Horse. 4, Nag. 5, Wife. 9, Aged. 10, Care. 11, Will. 12, Lack.

£100 OUTRIGHT WINNER: F. S. Bell, 158 Duston Road, St. James', Northampton.

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HOW TO WIN

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

Beauty Of Britain
Umpire Uno
To End The Cold War
Golden Days
Skill Of The Craftsman
In Our Blood
Lost Sight Of
Ignorance
Wrecker Of Homes
Means More
She Loves Him, But
Needs A Holiday
Lady Nicotine
Got It All Wrong
Priceless
Nearly Collapsed
Passing The Pub
Dad's Mower
Hair-raising Feat
In A Tumbledown Shack

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

The.....Was Late, So
If It Were.....
Dodging The.....
Flavoured With.....
.....For The Doctor
A Little ..... Somewhere

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "COMBINED," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

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One Skylark—*Wonderland*!

£50: R. C. Readett, 1 Tetley Road, Birmingham: SUNNIER WORLD—NEEDS "DARKEST HOUR" SPIRIT.

£25: J. Pember, Berwick St. James, Salisbury: FORTUNE'S FAVOURITE—UNTIL *Overwork* KILLED HIM!

OTHER AWARDS. £10: E. Cameron, 59 Commercial Brow, Hyde, Cheshire: ONE SPRING MORNING—MADE ME "SKIP"—*Headlines*! £9: F. W. Hancock, The Olde Manse, Reeth, Richmond, Yorks: A SITTING TARGET—FOR HER "PUPILS"—BRITANNIA. £8: Mrs. D. Rowland, 51 Alver Road, Gosport: SHOULD HAVE A BATTLESHIP—TAX-COLLECTOR APPROACHING SCILLIES! £7: R. North, 26 Knutsford Street, Birmingham: LAST OF THE AGGRESSORS—HAS "LAST FRONTIER" SEEN? £6: J. H. Baynton, 49 Pontygwindy Road, Caerphilly: A PAGE OF HISTORY—BADLY "WRITTEN"—"PUNISHING" SONNY. £5: J. Brown, 52 St. Cuthberts Road, Holy Cross, Wallsend-on-Tyne: LAGGING BEHIND—MISSING ALL THE—*Pitfalls*! £5: A. Rogers, 80 Cartington Terrace, Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne: WHEN SHE'S FORGETTING—HER BIRTHDAYS, DON'T YOU!

For ten winners of £2 10s., see "*Bullets*" *Bulletin*. 50 *Bullets* Season Tickets and 1,500 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross / & Co. /, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated June 13, and in JOHN BULL dated June 20), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, June 6, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,886 result.)

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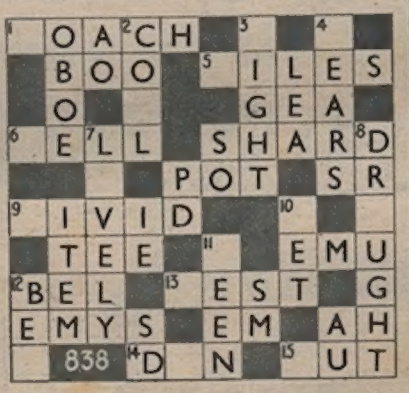
Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated June 6.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.



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